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W. SHAKESPEARE

THE STUDENTS' HANDY EDITION.

THE WORKS

OF

SHAKESPEARE:

THE TEXT CAREFULLY RESTORED ACCORDING TO
THE FIRST EDITIONS; WITH INTRODUCTIONS,
NOTES ORIGINAL AND SELECTED, AND
A LIFE OF THE POET;

BY THE

REV. H. N. HUDSON, A.M.

REVISED EDITION, WITH ADDITIONAL NOTES.

IN TWELVE VOLUMES.

VOL. XII.

BOSTON:
ESTES AND LAURIAT,
301 WASHINGTON STREET.

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INTRODUCTION.

ROWE'S ACCOUNT OF THE POET'S LIFE.

SHAKESPEARE, by general suffrage, is the greatest name in Literature. There can be no extravagance in saying, that to all who speak the English language his genius has made the world better worth living in, and life a nobler and diviner thing. And, throughout the civilized world, those who do not "speak the tongue that Shakespeare spake" are growing more and more to wish that his vernacular were theirs, and even to study the English language, that they may be at home with him. How he came to be what he was, and to do what he did, are questions that can never cease to be interesting, wherever his works are known, and men's powers of thought in any fair measure developed. But Providence has left a veil, or rather cloud, about his history, so that these questions can never be satisfactorily answered. And perhaps it is better that the thing stands thus, lest we should trust overmuch to historical transpirations for the understanding of that which no such transpirations can adequately convey. Nevertheless, these questions are certainly well worth all the labour and pains that have been or are likely to be spent in trying to answer them from the grounds of history. We have barely facts enough to stimulate and guide in the right course of inquiry; and where facts are so few, there is the less danger of our relying too much on these for that knowledge which, after all, must be chiefly sought for in a higher sphere of thought.

The first formal attempt at an account of Shakespeare's life was made by Rowe, and the result of his labours was published in 1709, ninety-three years after the Poet's death. Rowe's account was avowedly made up for the most part from traditionary materials collected by Betterton the actor, who made a journey to Stratford expressly for that purpose.[1] Betterton was born in 1635, nineteen years after the death of Shakespeare, became an actor before 1660, retired from the stage about 1700, and died in 1710. At what time he visited Stratford, is not known: Malone thinks it was late in life; Mr. Collier, that it was not later than 1670 or 1675, "when he would naturally be more enthusiastic in a pursuit of that kind, and when he had not been afflicted by that disorder from which he suffered so severely in his later years, and to which, in fact, he owed his death." It is to be regretted that Rowe did not give Betterton's authorities for the particulars gathered by him. It is certain, however, that very good sources of information on the subject were accessible in his time: Judith Quiney, the Poet's second daughter, lived till 1662; Lady Barnard, his granddaughter, till 1670; and Sir William Davenant was manager of the theatre in which Betterton acted.[2]

[1] I cannot leave Hamlet, without taking notice of the advantage with which we have seen this master-piece of Shakespeare distinguish itself upon the stage, by Mr. Betterton's fine performance of that part. No man is better acquainted with Shakespeare's manner of expression; and indeed he has studied him so well, and is so much a master of him, that whatever part of his he performs, he does it as if it had been written on purpose for him, and that the author had exactly conceived it as he plays it. I must own a particular obligation to him for the most considerable part of the passages relating to this Life, which I have here transmitted to the public; his veneration for the memory of Shakespeare having engaged him to make a journey into Warwickshire, on purpose to gather up what remains he could of a name for which he had so great a veneration. — ROWE'S *Account*.

[2] Downes was prompter at one of the theatres in 1662, and for some time afterwards. In his Roscius Anglicanus, 1708, we have the following in reference to Sir William Davenant's theatre, between 1662 and 1665: "The tragedy of Hamlet: Hamlet being

After Rowe's narrative, scarce any thing was added till the time of Malone, who by a learned and most industrious searching of public and private records brought to light a considerable number of facts, some of them very important, touching the Poet and his family. And in our own day, Mr. Collier has followed up the same course of inquiry with almost incredible diligence, and with a degree of success that gives earnest of still further discoveries yet to be made. Lastly, Mr. Halliwell has brought his intelligent and indefatigable labours to the same task, and made some valuable additions to our stock of information. Collier's Life of the Poet, published in 1844, is a work of very great interest and worth, and will long stand a monument of the author's learned and patient research; but, besides being too lengthy for our purpose, it needs in divers particulars to be corrected or completed, from the results of later investigation. Halliwell's Life was published in 1848. It is a work of small pretence and large merit; though its merit consists rather in the fulness and accuracy of the original materials, than in the shape and expression which the author has given them: so that the work, though highly valuable to the scholar, is little suited to the purposes of the general reader.

The labours of Rowe, Malone, Collier, and Halliwell are all before us; and whatsoever we can gather from them towards making the reader acquainted with the man Shakespeare, will be found embodied in the following pages. Of course no means of adding to the stock of matter lie within

perform'd by Mr. Betterton, Sir William, having seen Mr. Taylor of the Black-fryars company act it, who being instructed by the author, Mr. Shakespear, taught Mr. Betterton in every particle of it; which, by his exact performance of it, gain'd him esteem and reputation superlative to all other plays. . . . King Henry the 8th. This play, by order of Sir William Davenant, was all new cloath'd in proper habits. The part of the King was so right and justly done by Mr. Betterton, he being instructed in it by Sir William, who had it from old Mr. Lowen, that had his instructions from Mr. Shakespear himself, that I dare and will aver none can or will come near him in this age in the performance of that part."

our reach, even if we had ever so much time and skill to prosecute such researches; so that the most we can hope for is, to put into a compact and readable shape what others have collected. As Rowe's narrative was the first essay of the kind, and as it is, withal, very brief and well-written, it may justly receive a place in this our introductory chapter:

SOME ACCOUNT

OF THE

LIFE OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

It seems to be a kind of respect due to the memory of excellent men, especially those whom their wit and learning have made famous, to deliver some account of themselves, as well as their works, to posterity. For this reason, how fond do we see some people of discovering any little personal story of the great men of antiquity! their families, the common accidents of their lives, and even their shape, make, and features have been the subject of critical inquiries. How trifling soever this curiosity may seem to be, it is certainly very natural; and we are hardly satisfied with an account of any remarkable person, till we have heard him described even to the very clothes he wears. As for what relates to men of letters, the knowledge of an author may sometimes conduce to the better understanding of his book; and though the works of Shakespeare may seem to many not to want a comment, yet I fancy some little account of the man himself may not be thought improper to go along with them.

He was the son of Mr. John Shakespeare, and was born at Stratford-upon-Avon, in Warwickshire, in April, 1564. His family, as appears by the register and public writings relating to that town, were of good figure and fashion there, and are mentioned as gentlemen. His father, who was a considerable dealer in wool, had so large a family, ten chil-

dren in all, that, though he was his eldest son, he could give him no better education than his own employment. He had bred him, it is true, for some time at a free-school, where it is probable he acquired what Latin he was master of; but the narrowness of his circumstances, and the want of his assistance at home forced his father to withdraw him from thence, and unhappily prevented his further proficiency in that language. It is without controversy, that in his works we scarce find any traces of any thing that looks like an imitation of the ancients. The delicacy of his taste, and the natural bent of his own great genius (equal, if not superior, to some of the best of theirs) would certainly have led him to read and study them with so much pleasure, that some of their fine images would naturally have insinuated themselves into and been mixed with his own writings; so that his not copying at least something from them may be an argument of his never having read them. Whether his ignorance of the ancients were a disadvantage to him or no, may admit of a dispute; for, though the knowledge of them might have made him more correct, yet it is not improbable but that the regularity and deference for them, which would have attended that correctness, might have restrained some of that fire, impetuosity, and even beautiful extravagance which we admire in Shakespeare; and I believe we are better pleased with those thoughts, altogether new and uncommon, which his own imagination supplied him so abundantly with, than if he had given us the most beautiful passages out of the Greek and Latin poets, and that in the most agreeable manner that it was possible for a master of the English language to deliver them.

Upon his leaving school, he seems to have given entirely into that way of living which his father proposed to him; and, in order to settle in the world after a family manner, he thought fit to marry while he was yet very young. His wife was the daughter of one Hathaway, said to have been a substantial yeoman in the neighbourhood of Stratford. In this kind of settlement he continued for some time, till an

extravagance that he was guilty of forced him both out of his country and that way of living which he had taken up; and, though it seemed at first to be a blemish upon his good manners, and a misfortune to him, yet it afterwards happily proved the occasion of exerting one of the greatest geniuses that ever was known in dramatic poetry. He had, by a misfortune common enough to young fellows, fallen into ill company; and among them some, that made a frequent practice of deer-stealing, engaged him with them more than once in robbing a park that belonged to Sir Thomas Lucy, of Charlecote, near Stratford. For this he was prosecuted by that gentleman, as he thought, somewhat too severely; and, in order to revenge that ill usage, he made a ballad upon him. And though this, probably the first essay of his poetry, be lost, yet it is said to have been so very bitter, that it redoubled the prosecution against him to that degree, that he was obliged to leave his business and family in Warwickshire for some time, and shelter himself in London.

It is at this time, and upon this accident, that he is said to have made his first acquaintance in the play-house. He was received into the company then in being, at first in a very mean rank; but his admirable wit, and the natural turn of it to the stage, soon distinguished him, if not as an extraordinary actor, yet as an excellent writer. His name is printed, as the custom was in those times, among those of the other players, before some old plays, but without any particular account of what sort of parts he used to play; and, though I have inquired, I could never meet with any further account of him this way, than that the top of his performance was the Ghost in his own Hamlet. I should have been much more pleased to have learned from some certain authority which was the first play he wrote: it would be without doubt a pleasure to any man curious in things of this kind, to see and know what was the first essay of a fancy like Shakespeare's. Perhaps we are not to look for his beginnings, like those of other authors, among his least

perfect writings: art had so little, and nature so large a share in what he did, that, for aught I know, the performances of his youth, as they were the most vigorous, and had the most fire and strength of imagination in them, were the best. I would not be thought by this to mean, that his fancy was so loose and extravagant as to be independent on the rule and government of judgment; but that what he thought was commonly so great, so justly and rightly conceived in itself, that it wanted little or no correction, and was immediately approved by an impartial judgment at the first sight. But, though the order of time in which the several pieces were written be generally uncertain, yet there are passages in some few of them which seem to fix their dates. So the Chorus, at the end of the fourth Act of Henry V., by a compliment very handsomely turned to the Earl of Essex, shows the play to have been written when that lord was general for the Queen in Ireland. And his eulogy upon Queen Elizabeth and her successor King James, in the latter end of his Henry VIII., is a proof of that play's being written after the accession of the latter of those two princes to the crown of England.

Whatever the particular times of his writing were, the people of his age, who began to grow wonderfully fond of diversions of this kind, could not but be highly pleased to see a genius arise among them of so pleasurable, so rich a vein, and so plentifully capable of furnishing their favourite entertainments. Besides the advantages of his wit, he was in himself a good-natured man, of great sweetness in his manners, and a most agreeable companion; so that it is no wonder if with so many good qualities he made himself acquainted with the best conversations of those times. Queen Elizabeth had several of his plays acted before her, and without doubt gave him many gracious marks of her favour: it is that maiden princess plainly, whom he intends by, "a fair vestal throned by the west." And that whole passage is a compliment very properly brought in, and very hand-

somely applied to her.[3] She was so well pleased with that admirable character of Falstaff, in the two Parts of Henry IV., that she commanded him to continue it for one play more, and to show him in love. This is said to be the occasion of his writing The Merry Wives of Windsor. How well she was obeyed, the play itself is an admirable proof. Upon this occasion it may not be improper to observe, that this part of Falstaff is said to have been written originally under the name of Oldcastle: some of that family being then remaining, the Queen was pleased to command him to alter it; upon which he made use of Falstaff. The present offence was indeed avoided; but I do not know whether the author may not have been somewhat to blame in his second choice, since it is certain that Sir John Falstaff, who was a knight of the garter, and a lieutenant-general, was a name of distinguished merit in the wars in France, in the times of Henry V. and Henry VI.[4]

[3] It is hardly needful to inform the reader that the passage referred to is in A Midsummer-Night's Dream, Act ii. sc. 1:

> "That very time I saw (but thou could'st not)
> Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
> Cupid all arm'd: a certain aim he took
> At a fair vestal throned by the west;
> And loos'd his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
> As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts:
> But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
> Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon,
> And the imperial votaress passed on,
> In maiden meditation, fancy-free."

[4] The blame, in this case, if there be any, rather seems to rest with Rowe himself, who confounds *Falstaff* with *Fastolfe*, the letter being the name of the distinguished soldier to whom he refers. Sir John Fastolfe figures a little as one of the characters in the First Part of King Henry the Sixth. The change of name from Oldcastle to Falstaff is discussed in our Introduction to the First Part of King Henry IV. In further illustration of the point, Mr. Halliwell, in his Life of the Poet, prints from manuscript a dedication by Dr. Richard James to Sir Henry Bourchier, written about the year 1625. We subjoin a part of this curious document, from which it will be seen that Rowe was not the first to confound

What grace soever the Queen conferred upon him, it was not to her only he owed the fortune which the reputation of his wit made. He had the honour to meet with many and uncommon marks of favour and friendship from the Earl of Southampton, famous in the histories of that time for his friendship to the unfortunate Earl of Essex. It was to that noble Lord that he dedicated his poem of Venus and Adonis. There is one instance so singular in the magnificence of this patron of Shakespeare's, that if I had not been assured that the story was handed down by Sir William Davenant, who was probably very well acquainted with his affairs, I should not have ventured to have inserted, that my Lord Southampton at one time gave him a thousand pounds, to enable him to go through with a purchase which he had heard he had a mind to. A bounty very great, and very rare at any time, and almost equal to that profuse generosity the present age has shown to French dancers and Italian singers.

Falstaff and *Fastolfe:* "A young gentle ladie of your acquaint ance, having read the works of Shakespeare, made me this question: How Sir Jhon Falstaffe, or Fastolf, as it is written in the statute book of Maudlin Colledge in Oxford, where everye daye that societie were bound to make memorie of his soule, could be dead in Harrie the Fifts time, and againe live in the time of Harrie the Sixt to be banisht for cowardize? Whereto I made answeare, that this was one of those humours and mistakes for which Plato banisht all poets out of his commonwealth; that Sir Jhon Falstaffe was in those times a noble valiant souldier, as apeeres by a book in the Heralds Office dedicated unto him by a herald whoe had binne with him, if I well remember, for the space of 25 yeeres in the French wars; that he seemes allso to have binne a man of learning, because, in a librarie of Oxford, I finde a book of dedicating churches sent from him for a present unto Bisshop Wainflete, and inscribed with his owne hand. That in Shakespeare's first shewe of Harrie the Fift, the person with which he undertook to playe a buffone was not Falstaff, but Sir Jhon Oldcastle; and that, offence beinge worthily taken by personages descended from his title, as peradventure by manie others allso whoe ought to have him in honourable memorie, the poet was putt to make an ignorant shifte of abusing Sir Jhon Fastolphe, a man not inferior of vertue tho igh not so famous in pietie as the other."

What particular habitude or friendships he contracted with private men, I have not been able to learn, more than that every one who had any true taste of merit, and could distinguish men, had generally a just value and esteem for him. His exceeding candour and good-nature must certainly have inclined all the gentler part of the world to love him, as the power of his wit obliged the men of the most delicate knowledge and polite learning to admire him.

His acquaintance with Ben Jonson began with a remarkable piece of humanity and good-nature. Mr. Jonson, who was at that time altogether unknown to the world, had offerred one of his plays to the players, in order to have it acted; and the persons into whose hands it was put, after having turned it carelessly and superciliously over, were just upon returning it to him with an ill-natured answer, that it would be of no service to their company; when Shakespeare luckily cast his eye upon it, and found something so well in it as to engage him first to read it through, and afterwards to recommend Mr. Jonson and his writings to the public. Jonson was certainly a very good scholar, and in that had the advantage of Shakespeare; though at the same time I believe it must be allowed, that what nature gave the latter was more than a balance for what books had given the former; and the judgment of a great man upon this occasion was, I think, very just and proper. In a conversation between Sir John Suckling, Sir William Davenant, Endymion Porter, Mr. Hales of Eton, and Ben Jonson, — Sir John Suckling, who was a professed admirer of Shakespeare, had undertaken his defence against Ben Jonson with some warmth: Mr. Hales, who had sat still for some time, told them that, if Shakespeare had not read the ancients, he had likewise not stolen any thing from them; and that, if he would produce any one topic finely treated by any of them, he would undertake to show something upon the same subject at least as well written by Shakespeare.[5]

[5] The same story is told with more minuteness by Gildon in an

The latter part of his life was spent, as all men of good sense will wish theirs may be, in ease, retirement, and the conversation of his friends. He had the good fortune to gather an estate equal to his occasions, and, in that, to his wish; and is said to have spent some years before his death at his native Stratford. His pleasurable wit and good-nature engaged him in the acquaintance, and entitled him to the

Essay addressed to Dryden in 1694. The writer, it may be seen, appeals to Dryden as his authority for the anecdote: "But, to give the world some satisfaction that Shakespeare has had as great veneration paid his excellence by men of unquestioned parts as this I now express for him, I shall give some account of what I have heard from your own mouth, Sir, about the noble triumph he gained over all the ancients, by the judgment of the ablest critics of that time. The matter of fact, if my memory fail me not, was this: Mr. Hales of Eton affirmed that he would show all the poets of antiquity outdone by Shakespeare, in all the topics and commonplaces made use of in poetry. The enemies of Shakespeare would by no means yield him so much excellence; so that it came to a resolution of a trial of skill upon that subject. The place agreed on for the dispute was Mr. Hales' chamber at Eton. A great many books were sent down by the enemies of this poet; and on the appointed day my Lord Falkland, Sir John Suckling, and all the persons of quality that had wit and learning, and interested themselves in the quarrel, met there; and, upon a thorough disquisition of the point, the judges chosen by agreement out of this learned and ingenious assembly unanimously gave the preference to Shakespeare, and the Greek and Roman poets were adjudged to vail at least their glory in that to the English hero." — It may be well to and that John Hales, cauon of Windsor and Fellow of Eton, was for his great learning called "the ever-memorable," and "the walking library." Under the tyranny of the Long Parliament, he was thrust from his preferment and stripped of his revenues; and when an offer was made of restoring him the fellowship he refused it, saying, that "as the Parliament had put him out, he was resolved never to be put in again by them." He died in 1656. Lord Clarendon says of him, "he had made a greater and better collection of books, than were to be found in any other private library that I have seen; as he had sure read more, and carried more about him in his excellent memory, than any man I ever knew, my lord Falkland only excepted, who, I think, sided him." And he adds, referring to his smallness of person, "he was one of the least men in the kingdom; and one of the greatest scholars in Europe."

friendship of the gentlemen of the neighbourhood. Among them, it is a story almost still remembered in that country, that he had a particular intimacy with Mr. Combe, an old gentleman noted thereabouts for his wealth and usury. It happened, that in a pleasant conversation among their common friends, Mr. Combe told Shakespeare, in a laughing manner, that he fancied he intended to write his epitaph, if he happened to outlive him; and, since he could not know what might be said of him when he was dead, he desired it might be done immediately. Upon which Shakespeare gave him these four lines of verse:

> "Ten in the hundred lies here ingrav'd;
> 'Tis a hundred to ten his soul is not sav'd:
> If any man ask, who lies in this tomb?
> O, ho! quoth the devil, 'tis my John-a-Combe."

But the sharpness of the satire is said to have stung the man so severely, that he never forgave it.

He died in the fifty-third year of his age, and was buried on the north side of the chancel, in the great church at Stratford, where a monument is placed in the wall. On his gravestone underneath is,—

> "Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbear
> To dig the dust inclosed here:
> Blest be the man that spares these stones,
> And curst be he that moves my bones."

He had three daughters, of which two lived to be married; Judith, the elder, to one Mr. Thomas Quiney, by whom she had three sons, who all died without children; and Susannah, who was his favourite, to Dr. John Hall, a physician of good reputation in that country. She left one child only, a daughter, who was married first to Thomas Nash, Esq.; and afterwards to Sir John Bernard, of Abington, but died likewise without issue.

CHAPTER I.

THE FAMILY OF SHAKESPEARE.

THE RACE and lineage of WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE has not been traced, on the paternal side, further back than to his grandfather, nor is the process altogether certain even so far as that. The name, which in its very composition smacks of brave old knighthood and chivalry, was frequent in Warwickshire from an early period. It occurs repeatedly in a manuscript "Register of the brothers and sisters of the Guild of St. Anne of Knolle," from the year 1407 to the dissolution of the Guild in 1535. Among them are found the Christian names John, Ralph, Richard, Thomas, Christopher, and William; mention is also made of a "Lady Jane Shakespeare," and of an "Isabella Shakespeare, formerly Prioress of Wroxhall." The sur-name is there variously spelt.[1] Several of these Shakespeares are spoken of as belonging to the town of Rowington, where the name continues to be met with for a long time after; a William Shakespeare being mentioned as one of the jury in 1614, and a Margaret Shakespeare as being married there in 1665.[2] And for more than a century later, the name is met

[1] It may be well to give a few items from the Register in illustration of this: About 1440, "Pro anima Ricardi Shakspere et Aliciæ uxoris ejus, de Woldiche;"—about 1464 "Radulphus Schakespere et Isabella uxor ejus, et pro anima Johannæ uxoris primæ;"—"Ricardus Schakespeire de Wrcxsale et Margeria uxor ejus;"—"Johannes Shakespeyre ejusdem villæ (Rowington) et Alicia uxor ejus;"—1476, "Thomas Chacsper et Christian. cons. suæ de Rowneton;"—1486, "Pro anima Thomæ Schakspere;"—1505, "Orate pro anima Isabellæ Shakspere quondam Priorissa de Wraxale;"—1512, "Ballishalle, Alicia Shakespere et pro anima Thomæ Shakespere;"—"Meriden, Christophorus Shakespere et Isabella uxor ejus;"—1527, "Domina Jane Shakspere;"—"Willielmus Shakspere et Agnes uxor."

[2] Mr. Halliwell mentions a Thomas Shackspear, of Rowing

with in the Rowington papers. It appears also that there where Shakespeares living at Balsal, Woldiche, Claverdon, Hampton, and other places in Warwickshire : a John Shakespeare was living at Warwick in 1578, and a Thomas Shakespeare in 1585 ; and a William Shakespeare was drowned in the Avon, near that town, in 1579 :[3] a Thomas Shakespeare, also, was chosen bailiff of Warwick in 1613, and again in 1627.

There is no doubt that the father of our Poet was JOHN SHAKESPEARE, who, as we shall presently see, was living at Stratford-on-Avon in 1552. He was most likely a native of Snitterfield, a village three miles from Stratford. The ground of this likelihood is, that we find a RICHARD SHAKESPEARE living at Snitterfield in 1550, and occupying a house and land owned by ROBERT ARDEN, the maternal grandfather of our Poet. This appears from a deed executed July 17, 1550, in which Robert Arden conveyed certain lands and tenements in Snitterfield, described as being "now in the tenure of one Richard Shakespeare," to be held in trust for three daughters, "after the death of Robert and Agnes Arden."[4] It has been also ascertained that there was a Henry

ton, as being assessed on goods of the value of £3 in the Subsidy Roll of 1597; and a Thomas Shaxper, senior, of the same place, assessed on land of the value of thirty shillings in a similar roll of 1610. He adds the following : " Amongst some early undated fragments of Records relating to Warwickshire, preserved in the Carlton Ride, I find a mention of a John Shakeseper, of Rowington. If our Poet's family had been nearly connected with this branch, it is most probable one of his brothers would have received the Christian name of Thomas. A survey of crown lands in Warwickshire, 1607, in the Land Revenue Office, notices a Thomas, George, Richard, and John Shakespeare, as holding property in Rowington."

[3] Mr. Halliwell prints the following curious entry from the Parish Register of St. Nicholas, Warwick: "1579, Junii: sexto die hujus mensis sepultus fuet Gulielmus Saxspere, qui demersus fuet in rivulo aquæ qui vel quæ vocatur Avona." The same register also has the following: "1598, Junii 21 : Solemnizatum matrimonium inter Thomam Shaxeper et Elizabeth Letherberrow."

[4] Mr. Halliwell prints this deed in full. We subjoin enough of

Shakespeare living at Snitterfield in 1586; the Parish Register of that village showing that on the 4th of September in that year Henry Townsend was baptized, and Henry Shakespeare one of the sponsors. From the same source we also learn that a Henry Shakespeare died there in 1596.[5] Both Malone and Collier conjectured that this Henry was brother to the John Shakespeare, who is found at Stratford in 1552. There can be little doubt that such was the case; for in 1587 Nicholas Lane brought an action against John Shakespeare for debt; and from a declaration filed that year in the Court of Record at Stratford, it appears that this was a debt wherein John had become surety for his brother Henry; and that, the latter not paying, John was proceeded against for the amount.[6] Supposing the Richard Shakespeare, who

it to authenticate the statement of the text: "Sciant præsentes et futuri quod ego Robertus Arderu, de Wylmecote in parochia de Aston Cantlowe in com. Warr., husbandman, dedi, concessi, et hac præsenti carta mea tripartiter indentat. confirmavi Adæ Palmer de Aston Cantlowe prædict., et Hugoni Porter de Snytterfylde in com. prædicato, totum illud mesuagium meum cum suis pertinentiis in Snytterfylde prædict., *quæ nunc sunt in tenura cujusdam Ricardi Shakespere*, ac omnia illa mea terr. prat. pascuas et pasturas, cum suis pertinentiis in Snytterfylde predict. eidem mesuagio spectant. et pertinent., quæ nunc sunt in tenura prædicti Ricardi Shakespere."

[5] This no doubt is the same person as the one mentioned in 1586. The following are some of the entries relating to him: "1586, 4 Sept. Baptysed Henry Townsend, the sonn of John Townsend and Darrity his wyff. William Meaydes, Henry Shaxsper, Elizabeth Perkes, pleages."—"1596. Henrey Shaxspere was buryed the xxix.th day of December."—"1597. Margret Saxspere widow, being times the wyff of Henry Shakspere, was buried ix. Feb."—The will of Christopher Smyth of Stratford, made Nov. 2d, 1586, also has the following: "Item, Heury Shaxspere of Snytterfild oweth me v. *li.* ix. *s.*"—There was also an Antony Shakespeare living at Snitterfield in 1569, and a Thomas Shakespeare in 1582. These were most likely brothers of John, and all three of them sons of Richard Shakespeare.

[6] The original of this declaration is preserved at Stratford, and a copy of it is given in Halliwell's Life of the Poet. The relationship of John and Henry Shakespeare is shown by the following passage: "Quoddam colloquium tractatum et habitum fuit

was a tenant of Robert Arden in 1550, to be the father of John and Henry, this will go far to explain the alliance which afterwards took place between the Arden and Shakespeare families.

At what time John Shakespeare took up his abode at Stratford, has not been fully ascertained. Until quite lately, the earliest trace of him there was in June, 1556, when a suit was brought against him in the Bailiff's Court by Thomas Siche for the sum of £8, and in the register of the Court he is described as "John Shakespeare, of Stratford in the county of Warwick, *glover*." A few years ago, however, the Rev. Mr. Hunter discovered an entry in a Court Roll dated April 29th, 1552, and preserved in the Record Office of Carlton Ride; from which it appears that John Shakespeare and two other citizens were fined twelve pence each, for permitting filth to accumulate in Henley-street contrary to the order of the Court.[7] This, it seems, was a common offence, and was often visited in like manner by the Stratford authorities. In 1558, the same John Shakespeare, and four others, one of whom was Francis Burbage, then at the head of the corporation, were fined 4*d.* each, "for not keeping of their gutters clean."[8]

inter præfatum Johannem Shakesper et dictum Nicholaum Lane, de quodam debito viginti et duarum libr. legalis monetæ Angliæ, in quibus *Henricus Shaxpere, frater dicti Johannis*, debito modo indebitatus fuit præfato Nicholao Lane, et super colloquium illud aggreat. et concordat. fuit."

[7] This curious entry is printed by Mr. Halliwell, thus: "Item, [juratores] present. super sacramentum suum quod Humfridus Reynoldes (xii. *d.*) Adrianus Quirey (xii. *d.*) et Johannes Shaky spere (xii. *d.*) fecerunt sterquinarium in vico vocato Hendley strete contra ordinationem curiæ. Ideo ipsi in miserecordia, ut patet."

[8] Noted in the records of the Stratford Court thus: "Francis Berbage, master baly that now ys, Adreane Quiny, Mr. Hall, Mr. Clopton, for the gutter alonge the chappell in Chappell Lane, John Shakspeyr, for not kepynge of their gutters clene, they stand amerced." Halliwell prints a very curious set of orders made at a Stratford Court in 1553. The following are a specimen:

"Item, that no ynhabytaunte dwellynge within this lyberty from hensfurthe receve nor have eny ynmak out only such persones as

There is ample proof that at this period John Shakespeare's affairs were in a thriving condition. The action brought against him by Siche, in June, 1556, seems to have been without any good ground. Mr. Collier indeed says "the issue of the suit is not known;" but Halliwell prints a large number of entries respecting him from the registry of the Court of Record, one of which shows that in August 1556, the suit issued altogether in his favour, the plaintiff not even appearing in Court.[9] As for his being termed a glover in 1556, this need not infer any thing more than that such was his original branch of business at Stratford, or perhaps at that time his leading branch. And on the 19th of November, in the same year, he is found bringing an action against Henry Field for unjustly detaining eighteen quarters

shalbe apwntyd and admytted by the hy bely, constabull, and other thoffeceres and the xii. men, in peyne of every offendor forfet and losse for every offence xx. *s.*, and ther bodyes to remayne in the open stokes iii. day and iii. nyghtes; and that no housholdar receve eny straunger, nor to lodge eny by nyght, without a specyall lycence of the hye bely, in like peyne.

"Item, that no jurneyman prentes, nor eny maner servaunt, be forthe of ther or his master hous by the nyght after the our of nyne by the clok, in peyne of iii. days and iii. nyghtes ponyshement in the open stokes, and to forfet and pay xx. *s.*; and that no mane receve eny suche person so offendynge, in lyke peyne.

"Item, that every tenaunt in Chapell lane or Ded lane do scour and kep cleane ther gutters or dyches in the same lane befor thassencyon day, and so from thensfurthe from tyme to tyme to kepe the same, in peyn of every offendor to forfet for every deffalt iii. *s.* iiii. *d.*; and that every tenaunt do ryd the soyelles in the stretes of logges and blokes ther lyenge and beynge to the noysaunce of the kynges leage people, by the same day, in lyke peyne.

"Item, that the hye bely that now ys four tymez in the yere do ryd and make cleane his mukhyll, and the same honestly be kept, in peyn of xx. *s.*; and that no other mukhylles be mayntayned, kept, nor made within the towne, but only thos that be apwntyd, in lyke peyne."

[9] The entry reads as follows: "Aug. 12, 3 & 4 Phil. et Mar. Ad hanc curiam venit Johannes Shakyspere per Thomam Marten consil. ad barr., et petit judicium versus Thomam Siche, quia non protulit actionem quæ habuit versus prædictum Johannem Shaky spere. et habet judicium cum expensis."

of barley.[10] From which it seems not unlikely that he may have been at that time engaged more or less in agricultural pursuits. It appears that at a later period agriculture was his main pursuit, if not his only one; for the records of the corporation show that in 1564 he was paid three shillings for a piece of timber; and we find him described in 1579 as a "yeoman." This may be as good a place as any for noticing the tradition given by Rowe, of his having been "a considerable dealer in wool." It is nowise improbable that such may have been the case. The modern divisions of labour and trade were then little known, and less regarded: several kinds of business were often carried on together, which are now kept quite distinct, and we have special proof that gloves and wool were apt to be united as articles of trade.[11]

We have further proof of John Shakespeare's thrift at the period now in question. On the 2d of October, 1556, the same year in which we find him spoken of as a glover, he became the owner of two copy-hold estates in Stratford, which were alienated to him by George Turnor and Edward West. One of these was on Greenhill-street, consisting of a house with a garden and croft attached to it; the other on Henley-street, consisting of a house and garden. For each he was to pay the lord of the manor a yearly rent of six pence.[12] As we have found him in Henley-street in 1552, it

[10] This item occurs in the registry quoted from in the preceding note: "Nov. 19, 3 & 4 Phil. et Mar. Johannes Shakyspere queritur versus Henr. Fyld in placito quod reddat ei xviii. quarteria orde quæ ei injuste detinet."

[11] "The trwe inventory of the goodes of Joyce Hobday, late of Stratford upon Avon, in the county of Warwycke, wydowe, deceassed, taken the 3 day of Apriell, 1602," has the following: "Inp. George Shacleton oweth me for wol. xxiiii. *s.*"—"Item, Mr. Guttredge oweth me for calves lether iiii. *s.* viii. *d.*"—"John Edwards of Allveston alias Allston oweth me for two pere of gloves viii. *d.*"

[12] The original borough-records show the following under the date given in the text:

is not unlikely that he may have then rented and occupied one of the houses which he now purchased. Probably enough, also, this may be the same house in which tradition makes the Poet to have been born. As both the estates in question were estates of inheritance, the tenure was nearly equal to freehold; so that he must have been pretty well to do in the world at the time. For several years after, his circumstances continued to improve. Before 1558, he had become the owner, by marriage, of a farm at Wilmecote called Ashbyes, consisting of fifty-six acres, besides two houses and two gardens: moreover, he held, in right of his wife, a considerable share in a property at Snitterfield.

His thrift is further shown in that, before the close of 1570, he is found holding under William Clopton, at a yearly rent of £8, a farm of about fourteen acres, called Ingon meadow, situate within two miles of Stratford. At what time he first rented it, does not appear, the instrument proving his tenancy being dated June 11th, 1581, and only stating that on the 11th of December, 1570, the place was in his occupation.[13] We learn, however, from an indenture made on the 30th of May, 1568, that he was not then holding the property. Eight pounds being a very large rent for only so much land, Malone conjectured that there may have been "a good dwelling-house and orchard" upon the place;

"Item, præsentant quod Georgius Turnor alienavit Johanni Shakespere et hæredibus suis unum tenementum cum gardin et croft, cum pertinentiis, in Grenehyll stret. tent. de domino libere per cartam pro redd. inde domino per annum vi.*d.* et sect. cur. et idem Johannes prædictus in curia fecit domino fidelitatem pro eisdem.

"Item, quod Edwardus West alienavit prædicto Johanni Shakespere unum tenementum cum gardin adjacente, in Henley strete, pro redd. inde domino per annum vi. *d.* et sect. cur. et idem Johannes prædictus in curia fecit fidelitatem."

[13] The following are the words of the instrument: "And also one other meadowe, with thappurtenaunces, called or knowen by the name of Ingon alias Ington meadowe, conteynynge by estimacion fouretene acres, be it more or lesse, then or late in the tenure or occupacion of John Shaxpere or his assignes."

and Knight seems quite confident that John Shakespeare must have used it as a place of residence. This latter, to say the least, is rather unlikely; for in September, 1568, he became high bailiff of Stratford, which office he held a year and in September, 1571, he was made chief alderman; besides, as Collier observes, he had a child baptized at the parish-church of Stratford on the 28th of September, 1571; all which makes against the notion of his having then resided at the place in question.

Another large addition to his property was made in 1575. This was a freehold estate on Henley-street, bought of Edmund and Emma Hall for the sum of £40, and described, in a fine levied on the occasion, and dated September 29th, 1575, as consisting of "two houses, two gardens, and two orchards, with their appurtenances." One of these houses is supposed to have been his residence from that time, and the home of the Poet's youth. Probably the two houses purchased nearly nine years before were still owned by him, nothing having been found to show that he had ever parted with them.

Several other particulars have been discovered, which go to ascertain the wealth of John Shakespeare as compared with that of other citizens of Stratford. In 1564, the year of the Poet's birth, a malignant fever, called the plague, invaded Stratford. Its hungriest period was from June 30th to December 31st, during which time it swept off 238 persons, out of a population of about 1400. None of John Shakespeare's family are found among its victims; and Mr. Collier thinks they may have escaped its ravages by withdrawing for the season to Snitterfield, which seems to have been comparatively untouched by the destroyer. We have seen that at this time he held property there in right of his wife, and that his father formerly lived there as tenant of Robert Arden. Large draughts were made upon the charities of Stratford, on account of this frightful visitation. On the 20th of August, a meeting of the citizens was held

in the open air, from fear of infection, and divers sums contributed for the relief of the poor.[14] The high bailiff gave 3*s.* 4*d.*, and the head alderman 2*s.* 8*d.* John Shakespeare, being then only a burgess, gave 12*d.*; and in the list of burgesses there are but two who gave more. Again, on the 6th of September, he and four others gave 6*d.* each, the bailiff and six aldermen giving each 12*d.* On the 27th, another contribution was made, he giving 6*d.*, and others nearly the same as before. Finally, on the 20th of October, he appears as the donor of 18*d.* In the accounts of the borough, also, for the same year, we find the corporation in debt to him for the sum of £1 5*s.* 8*d.*;[15] and a similar account for 1665, shows the sum of £3 2*s.* 7*d.* paid him in discharge of an "old debt," and also a further debt of 7*s.* 4*d.*, "to be paid unto him by the next chamberlains." All which may be taken as proving him to have gained a place among the more substantial citizens of the town.

We have already spoken of John Shakespeare as holding important offices in the corporation of Stratford. This seems a proper place for tracing his career in that respect. His name is first found in connection with the public affairs of the borough on the 30th of April, 1557, when he was marked as one of twelve jurymen of a court-leet; and he was on a similar jury, September 30th, 1558; which shows

[14] Noted in the Stratford records thus: "At the hall holldyn in oure garden, the 30. daye of Auguste anno 1564, moneye paid towardes the releef of the poure." Then follows a list of 26 names of contributors.

[15] As some of the minutes in this account are very curious, it may be well to give a part of it: "Thaccompt of John Tayler and John Shakspeyr, chamburlens, made the x.th day of January in the syxte yere of our sovreigne lady Elyzabethe, &c.

"Item, payd to Shakspeyr for a pec tymbur . . . . iii.*s.*
"Item, payd the scollmaster . . . . . xvi.*li.*
"Item, payd *for defasying ymage in the chappell* . . ii.*s.*
"Item, payd to Alen for teching the chylder . . . . iiii.*li.*
"Item, at a hall holdon the xxvi. day of January anno prædicto, the chambur ys found in arrerage and ys in det unto John Shakspeyre . . . . . xxv.*s.* viii.*d.*

that he was then a regular trading inhabitant of the town. In 1557, he was also chosen an ale-taster, the duty of which office was, "to look to the assize and goodness of bread and ale, or beer, within the precincts of that lordship." September 30th, 1558, he was chosen one of the four constables, the other three being Humphrey Plymley, Roger Sadler, and John Taylor. On the 6th of October, 1559 he was elected to the same office for another year, and was a so made one of the four affeerors, whose duty it was, to determine the fines for such offences as had no penalties prescribed by statute. He held the latter office again in 1561, and in September of that year was also chosen one of the chamberlains of the borough, a very responsible office, which he filled for two years. Advancing steadily in public rank and confidence, he became an alderman on the 4th of July, 1565; and on the 29th of September, 1568, he was elected bailiff, the highest honour that the corporation could bestow. He held this office just a year. The series of local honours conferred upon him ended with his being chosen head alderman on the 5th of September, 1571, in which office he continued till September 3d, 1572. The rule being "once an alderman, always an alderman," unless positive action were taken to the contrary, he retained that office till 1586, when, for persevering non-attendance at the meetings, he was deprived of his gown.

After all these proofs of public consequence, the reader may be surprised to learn that John Shakespeare, the father of the greatest thinker and greatest poet the world has ever seen, could not write his name! Such was undoubtedly the fact; and we delight to publish it, as showing, what is too apt to be forgotten in these bookish days, that men may know several things, and beget witty children, without being initiated in the mysteries of pen and ink. The earliest known instance of his appearing as a marksman is in a list of names appended to the proceedings of a court-leet, dated October 6th, 1559. And in the records of the borough,

under the date of September 27th, 1565, is an order signed by nineteen aldermen and burgesses, calling upon John Wheler to undertake the office of bailiff. Of these nineteen signers thirteen are marksmen, and among them are the names of George Whately, then bailiff, Roger Sadler, head alderman, and John Shakespeare. So that there was nothing remarkable in his not being able to wield a pen. In this case, his mark is placed under his name to the right, so as to look as if it might be meant for Thomas Dyxon, whose name is written next after his. From the uncertainty thence arising, Knight labours hard to make out that he was not a marksman; but there are too many proofs of the fact, even if this one should fail. As bailiff of Stratford, John Shakespeare was *ex officio* a justice of the peace; and two warrants are extant, granted by him on the 3d and 9th of December, 1568, for the arrest of John Ball and Richard Walcar on account of debts; both of them bearing witness that "he had a mark to himself, like an honest plain-dealing man." Several other cases in point are met with at later periods. On the 15th of October, 1579, John and Mary Shakespeare "put their hands and seals" to a deed and bond for the transfer of their interest in certain property at Snitterfield to Robert Webbe; both of which are subscribed with their several marks, and sealed with their respective seals; his seal showing the initials J. S., and hers a rudely-engraved horse. His name with a mark affixed to it is also found subscribed to an inventory of the goods of Henry Field, dated August 21st, 1592. The last known instance of his mark is in a deed, bearing date January 26, 1597, conveying a small portion of his Henley-street property to George Badger. These several documents will be further noticed hereafter, and are but mentioned now for the special purpose in hand.

It may be worth noting, that before 1579 John Shakespeare had adopted a new mark; and this fact is supposed to have some connection with his change of business. In

both the deed and the bond of October 15th, 1579, transferring the Snitterfield interest to Webbe, he is styled "John Shakespeare, of Stratford-upon-Avon in the county of Warwick, *yeoman*." At what time he ceased to be a glover and became a yeoman, we have no means of knowing. His earlier mark, that of 1559 and 1565, is a sort of cabalistic figure, which Mr. Halliwell thinks to have been symbolical of his pursuit; resembling an instrument still in common use for stretching or opening the fingers of new gloves. His later mark, as found in the deed and bond just mentioned, and in all the after-instances of his signature, was a simple cross.

John Shakespeare's course of good fortune seems to have reached its height about the time of the large Henley-street purchase in 1575. The first evidence of a decline of prosperity is met with in 1578. At a borough meeting, held on the 29th of January that year, it was ordered that every alderman should pay 6*s.* 8*d.*, and every burgess 3*s.* 4*d.*, "towards the furniture of three pikemen, two billmen, and one archer." From this order seven persons, two aldermen and five burgesses, were excepted. John Shakespeare was one of the aldermen so excepted; he was to pay 3*s.* 4*d.*, and Humphrey Plymley, the other, 5*s.* Again, under the date of November the same year, the records of the borough have the following: "It is ordained that every alderman shall pay weekly towards the relief of the poor 4*d.*, saving Mr. John Shakespeare and Mr. Robert Bratt, *who shall not be taxed to pay any thing*." By the same order, Mr. Lewis and Mr. Plymley are taxed 3*d.* each, and every burgess 2*d.* Mr. Knight thinks that at the time of these assessments John Shakespeare may have resided out of Stratford, probably at Ingon meadow; and that this was the cause of his being thus excepted. Had such been the case, he would hardly have been legally designated in the deed and bond of October, 1579, just referred to, as "John Shakespeare, *of Stratford-upon-Avon*." Again, on the 11th of March,

1579, we have an account of money levied for the purchase of armour and arms; and "Mr. Shakespeare" is one of ten names whose "sums are unpaid and unaccounted for." His share in this case is put down as 3*s.* 4*d.* Another instance, to be mentioned here as showing him straitened for means, is furnished by the will of Roger Sadler, a baker dated November 14, 1578, and proved January 17, 1580. Appended to this will is a list of "debts which are owing unto me Roger Sadler," and among the items is one of Edmund Lambert and a man named Cornish, "for the debt of Mr. John Shakespeare, £5."[16]

There is another class of facts bearing towards the same conclusion. In the spring of 1579, John and Mary Shakespeare are found mortgaging their estate of Ashbies to Edmund Lambert for £40. The fine levied on this occasion is printed in Halliwell's Life; as is also another fine levied the same year, which shows the same parties transferring to Thomas Webbe and Humphrey Hooper some interest in an estate, not elsewhere heard of, in Wilmecote, described as consisting of "seventy acres of land, six acres of meadow, ten of pasture, and the right of common, with the appurtenances." The same year, on the 15th of October, also finds them parting with an interest in some property at Snitterfield to Robert Webbe for the sum of £4.[17] The deed

[16] Lest this should pass for more than it is worth, perhaps we ought to mention that in the same list Mr. John Combe is put down as owing £23; Mr. Lewis ap Williams, £3; "*Richard Hathaway alias Gardiner of Shottery*," £6 8*s.* 4*d.*; William Cox, £10; Mr. Michael Gutheridge, £1; George Merrill, £6 12*s.* 4*d.*; Mr. Thomas Trussell, £1 4*s.*; Richard Frost, £4; and Mr. Walter Roche, £4.

[17] This property was most likely a part of what Robert Arden speaks of in his will, 1556, as his wife's "jointure in Snitterfield." Agnes Arden had a life-interest in it. The deed of 1579 to Robert Webbe describes the property in question thus: "All that theire moitye, parte and partes, be yt more or lesse, of and in twoo messuages or tenements with thappurtenaunces, in Snitterfield afore said, and all houses, barnes, stables, gardens, orchards, medowes pastures, to the said twoo messuages belonginge or appertaininge or occupied with the same."

of conveyance and also the bond for the performance of covenants, with the names and marks of John and Mary Shakespeare subscribed, are printed at length by Mr. Halliwell. It appears, further, from a fine dated in the spring of 1580, and discovered by Mr. Halliwell in the Chapter House, that Mary Shakespeare had a reversionary interest of much higher value in some other property at Snitterfield, which was then made over to the same Robert Webbe for £40. This property was vested for term of life in Agnes Arden; and at her death, which occurred December 29th, 1580, a share in it would have reverted to Mary Shakespeare as one of the heirs-at-law of Robert Arden, who had died in 1556.[18]

These particulars show beyond question that John Shakespeare must have been somewhat pressed for money. How long the pressure continued is uncertain. The latter sale was probably made for the purpose of enabling him to discharge the mortgage held by Lambert; for on the 29th of September, 1580, the mortgage-money was tendered to Lambert, and was refused on the ground that other debts were owing to him by Shakespeare. Among the claims thus urged, may have been that already mentioned from the will of Sadler, for which Lambert had become surety; and the result proves, at all events, that either the claim was thought unjust, or else the party was unable to meet it. The tender and refusal of the money are ascertained from a replication made by John and Mary Shakespeare in a Chancery suit in 1597. On the death of Edmund Lambert, his son John retained possession of the premises, and the suit

[18] The following description of this property, and of the Shakespeare interest in it, is given by Mr. Halliwell, from an entry in certain records at Carlton Ride, dated Easter Term, 1580: "Inter Robertum Webbe quer. et Johannem Shackspere et Mariam uxorem ejus defore. de sexta parte duorum partium duorum mesuagiorum, duorum gardinorum. duorum pomar., lx. acrarum terræ x. acrarum prati, et xxx. acrarum jampnorum et bruerum, cum pertinentiis, in tres partes dividend. in Snitterfylde."

in Chancery was instituted for the recovery of them. No decree in the case has been found; but as the matter was at that time probably in the stronger hands of Shakespeare's son William, there can be little doubt that it was carried to a successful issue. Mr. Collier is of the opinion that Lambert may have relinquished the estate on the payment of the £40, and of the other sums claimed by his father in 1580.

Still we must not from these things infer too much as to the shortness of John Shakespeare's means in 1580. He was still in possession of the two copyhold estates alienated to him by Turnor and West in 1556: also the two freehold estates in Henley-street, which he purchased in 1575, were still owned by him, and on his death they remained as a part of his son's inheritance. Another curious fact is given by Mr. Halliwell as showing that his means could not have been at a very low ebb. It appears from the parish register, that a daughter of his was buried on the 4th of April 1579; and the Chamberlain's accounts for that year have an entry of 8*d.* paid by him for the bell and pall at the funeral; which is the largest fee in the list.[19] So that his distress could hardly have been so great at this time as hath sometimes been supposed, and as the other facts noticed might seem to infer.

Be this as it may, the pressure seems to have been still harder upon him a few years later. It is not improbable that his affairs may have got embarrassed from his having "too many irons in the fire." The registry of the Court of Record has a large number of entries respecting him, scattered over the whole period from 1555 to 1595, with the exception of fifteen years, from 1569 to 1584, during which the registry is deficient. These entries show him to have

[19] The following are the entries relating to this point:

"Item, for the bell and pall for Mr. Shaxpers dawter, . viii. *d*
"Item, for the bell for Mr. Trusseles child, ... iiii. *d*
'Item, for the bell for Mres. Combes, ... iiii. *d.*

been engaged in a great variety of transactions, and to have had more litigation on his hands than would now be thought either creditable or safe.

We have already seen that he was one of the aldermen from 1570 to 1586. He was very seldom absent from the councils of the borough before 1577; and from that time till his removal he was rarely present. He is marked, however, as attending a meeting held October 4th, 1577; and is found in regular attendance from that time till January 5th, 1578; after which date, the only instances of his being present were September 5th and November 4th, 1582. At length, at a meeting held September 6th, 1586, he was removed, and his non-attendance assigned as the reason of the act.[20] It is probable enough that his course in this matter may have grown from a wish to be quit of the office. Mr. Halliwell thinks his action is so far from arguing him to have been in pecuniary distress, that "it implies, on the contrary, the ability to pay the fines for non-attendance."[21] This seems to us nowise conclusive; for sacrifices of that kind are often made by men struggling to keep up their credit, and perhaps to retrieve or repair their fortune. Some personal antipathies growing out of his troubles may have rendered him unwilling to meet with his fellow-aldermen in public council. On the 25th of May, 1586, he was summoned to the Court of Record as a juryman; which proves him to have been in Stratford that year, and able to attend the meetings of the corporation.

Among the numerous entries concerning him in the regis-

[20] The records show the following minute of the proceedings: "At thys halle William Smythe and Richard Courte are chosen to be aldermen in the places of John Wheler and John Shaxspere; for that Mr. Wheler dothe desyre to be put owt of the companye, and Mr. Shaxspere dothe not come to the halles when they be warned, nor hathe not done of longe tyme."

[21] At a meeting held November 19th, 1578, it was "ordered that every alderman and burgese that hath made default, not comminge to this hall accordinge to the order, shall paye their merciament."

try of the Court of Record are several bearing upon the point in hand. On the 16th of February, 1586, we find an entry of a *capias* issued against him for debt: this is followed, on the 2d of March, by another *capias* issued in behalf of the same party; and the latter entry has a marginal note which seems to imply that after all the debt was not discharged. There is also an entry, on the 19th of January in the same year, of a return to the effect, that he had no goods on which distraint could be made. This is regarded by Mr. Halliwell, himself a lawyer, as the most formidable circumstance appearing against him: but he thinks that, taking into view the ancient forms of process in actions of debt, it "must be construed in a great measure by legal formality, not necessarily as an actual fact;" and he adds, "there can be little doubt that he was keeping himself out of the way of the service of a process." Another entry, dated March 29, 1587, mentions a writ of *habeas corpus* produced by John Shakespeare; which concludes with tolerable certainty either that he was in custody for debt, or that he wished to remove a cause to a higher court. What effect these things may have had on the Poet, will be considered hereafter. Mr. Halliwell winds up his notice of them as follows: "When we compare these facts with the probable date of Shakespeare's removal to London, it will, I think, be found to raise a strong probability in favour of the supposition that the circumstances of the family had some relation with that important step in the Poet's life."

One more particular will conclude this part of the subject. From a recent discovery in the State Paper Office, it appears that Sir Thomas Lucy, Sir Fulk Greville, and six others, having been commissioned to make inquiries touching priests, jesuits, recusants, and fugitives in Warwickshire, sent to the Privy Council what they call their "second certificate," dated September 25th, 1592. That portion of the certificate which relates to Stratford-on-Avon professes to return "the names of all such recusants as have been here-

tofore presented for not coming monthly to the church, according to her Majesty's laws; and yet are thought to forbear the church for debt, or for fear of process, or for some other worse faults, or for age, sickness, or impotency of body." This introduction is followed by a list of names, and among them are these nine: "Mr. John Wheler; John Wheler, his son; Mr. *John Shakespeare;* Mr. Nicholas Barneshurst; Thomas James, *alias* Giles; William Bainton; Richard Harrington; William Fluellen; George Bardolph." These are grouped by a bracket; and against them are the words,—"It is said that these last nine come not to church for fear of process of debt." Then come six other names grouped in like manner, and against them are the words,—"Were all here presented for recusants, and do all so continue, saving Mrs. Wheler, who is conformed, and Griffin ap Roberts now dead."

What we are to conclude from this matter, stands in much doubt. It is to be noted, that the return purports to give "the names of *all such recusants as have been heretofore presented;*" which would naturally infer that John Shakespeare had been named in a former list of persons suspected of recusancy; but on this point we are without any means of information, the most diligent search having failed to discover the *first* certificate of the commissioners. Perhaps all who did not go to church as often as once a month were *presumed* to be recusants, until they should show that they had other good causes for staying away. At all events, it is not very likely that John Shakespeare was indeed a recusant: he had all his children, that we hear of, regularly baptized at the parish church; and we have seen him holding several public offices which he could not have entered but under such oaths as no honest Romanist could think of taking. Still it is possible that, like many other conscientious men, having first embraced the Reformation, he afterwards had some misgivings, and would fain have returned to the faith of his earlier years.

We have now given all the information on this point that lies within our reach, and must leave the reader to his own judgment in the question. Touching the fear of process for debt, Mr. Collier thinks nothing of the sort would have kept him from church on Sunday, as no such process could be served on that day. But we suspect he must be mistaken here, else why should the return have alleged this as the cause of his not coming to church? The commissioners must have known what could and what could not be done on Sunday; and we cannot judge from the laws of our time what may have been lawful then. But, whatever may have been the cause in question, whether it were fear of arrest or aversion to the reformed faith, or whether it were "age, sickness, or impotency of body," it certainly did not prevent his being called upon to make inventories of the goods of persons deceased; a task which, according to the old law-books, should be performed by "four credible men or more." Twice in the year 1592, on the 24th of July and the 21st of August, we find him engaged in offices of that kind, Ralph Shaw and Henry Field being the persons whose goods were inventoried.[22] At the end of the latter document, we have the signature "John Shakespeare, senior," with his mark, a simple cross, placed, as usual, a little below his name, to

[22] This Henry Field was probably the same person against whom we found him bringing an action in 1556, for unjustly detaining a quantity of barley. — We subjoin the titles prefixed to these two inventories:

"The true and perfect inventory of Raph Shawe, of Stratford upon Avon in the county of Warwicke, woll-dryver, decessed; taken the xxiiii.th day of Julye, in the xxxiiii.th yeare of the raygne of our soveraygne lady Elizabeth, by the grace of God of England, France, and Ierland, Queene, defender of the Feyth, &c., by the discretion of Mr. John Shakspere, Mr. Willyam Wilson, and Valentyne Tant, with others.

"A trew and perfecte inventory of the goodes and cattells of Henry Feelde, late of Stretford uppon Avon in the cownty of Warwyke, tanner, now decessed, beyinge in Stretford aforesayd, the xxi. daye of Auguste, anno Domini 1592, by Thomas Trus sell, gentylman, Mr. John Shaksper, Richard Sponer, and others."

the right; and Mr. Halliwell says the signature is "undoubtedly in Trussell's handwriting." Collier thinks the word *senior* was in this case affixed, in order to distinguish him from a shoemaker of the same name, with whom he was perhaps then liable to be confounded, as he has sometimes been since.

From this time forward, his affairs were doubtless taken care of by one who, as we shall see hereafter, was much interested not to let them suffer, and also well able to keep them in good trim. In January, 1597, he is found selling a small portion of his Henley-street property to George Badger for £2; and the deed of conveyance shows him at that date still living in one of his Henley-street houses.[23] The last notice that has been discovered of him before his death is in a paper containing notes of an action for trespass brought by Sir Edward Greville against several burgesses of Stratford in 1601; in which he, along with four others, appears to have been called as a witness. He was buried on the 8th of September, the same year; so that, supposing him to have reached his majority when first heard of in 1552, he must have passed the age of three-score and ten.

On the maternal side our Poet's lineage was of a higher rank, and may be traced further back. His mother was MARY ARDEN, a name redolent of old poetry and romance. The family of Arden was among the most ancient in War-

[23] This deed was lately found in the office of a solicitor at Birmingham, who permitted Mr. Halliwell to take a transcript of it. The following is an abstract of it as given from the original by Mr. Halliwell: "26 Jan. 39 Eliz. Feoffment whereby John Shakespeare, of Stratford upon Avon, yeoman, in consideration of £2 by George Badger, did bargain, sale, give, deliver and confirm unto said George Badger, his heirs and assigns, all that toft or parcell of land in Stratford in Henley street, the house of said Shakespeare being on the East part thereof, and the house of said George Badger on the West part thereof, to hold to said George Badger his heirs and assigns. Executed by John Shakespeare, livery and seizin indorsed."

wickshire. Dugdale, under the head of Curdworth, says,—"In this place I have made choice to speak historically of that most ancient and worthy family, whose surname was first assumed from their residence in this part of the country, then and yet called Arden, by reason of its woodiness, the old Britons and Gauls using the word in that sense." He also speaks of one Turchill de Arden who received favours at the hands of the Conqueror, held large possessions in the shire, and occupied Warwick Castle as a military governor; for which cause he was called by the Normans Turchill de Warwick. The history of the Ardens, as given by Dugdale, spreads over six centuries. The earliest notice we have of the branch from which our Mary Arden sprung, is May, 1438, when land in Snitterfield was conveyed "to Thomas Arden, of Wilmecote, and to Robert Arden, his son." The pedigree of the family as traced by Dugdale brings us no further down in the direct line of Mary Arden than to Robert Arden, her great-grandfather. He was the third son of Walter Arden. Sir John Arden, an elder son of this Walter, was squire of the body to Henry VII.; and he had a nephew, the son of his younger brother Robert, also named Robert, who was page of the bed-chamber to the same monarch. These offices were at that time places of considerable service and responsibility; and both the uncle and the nephew were liberally rewarded by their royal master. Sir John Arden died in 1526. By conveyances dated December 14th and 21st, 1519, it appears that his nephew Robert then became the owner of houses and land in Snitterfield, purchased of Richard Rushby and his wife. He also bought another house in the same village, October 1st, 1529. To all this add the estate conveyed to Thomas and Robert Arden in 1438, which was most likely retained by their descendants in the next century, and we shall find Mary Arden's father the owner of a pretty large property in Snitterfield. Among these possessions, no doubt,

were the house and land which we have seen occupied by Richard Shakespeare in 1550.[24]

Mary Arden was the youngest of seven children, all of them daughters, and appears to have been her father's favourite. On the 7th of July, 1550, Robert Arden executed a deed conveying certain lands and houses in Snitterfield to Adam Palmer and Hugh Porter, to be held in trust for three daughters, Jocose Arden, Alice Arden, and Margaret Webbe. The latter was the wife of Alexander Webbe, and probably the mother of the Thomas and Robert Webbe, whom we have found purchasing certain Shakespeare interests at Wilmecote and Snitterfield in 1579 and 1580. Ten days later, on the 17th of July, 1550, by a similar deed, already noticed in connection with Richard Shakespeare, he conveyed certain other property in Snitterfield, reserving for himself and wife a life-interest therein, to the same trustees for three other daughters. These were Agnes Stringer, Katherine Etkins, and Joan Lambert, wife of Edward Lambert, a relative of the Edmund Lambert whom we have found taking a mortgage of Ashbies in 1579. In both the deeds here referred to, Robert Arden is styled "of Wilmecote, in the parish of Aston Cantlow, in the county of Warwick, *husbandman*." It is quite probable, though no instrument to that effect has been found, that before his death he made a similar provision for his youngest daughter, Mary; for we have seen that John Shakespeare held, in right of his wife,

[24] It continued in his tenure as late at least as 1560; for in an indenture made by Agnes Arden on the 21st of May, that year, she "demyseth, graunteth, &c., unto Alexander Webbe and to his assignes all those her two mesuages, with a cottage, with all and singuler their appurtenances, in Snytterfield, and a yarde and a halfe of ayrable land thereunto belongyng, with all lands, meadowes, pastures, commons, thereunto apperteynynge; all which now are in the occupation of Richarde Shakespere, John Henley, and John Hargreve." This property, of course, or a part of it, is the same, that we have already found Robert Arden conveying to be held in trust for three daughters, "after the death of Robert and Agnes Arden" See note 4 of this chapter.

some interest in Snitterfield, which he alienated to Robert Webbe for £4, in 1579. It was probably in this way, also, that she acquired the considerable interest at Wilmecote, which we have already noticed as being transferred, in 1579, to Thomas Webbe and Humphrey Hooper.

Robert Arden's will was made November 24th, and proved December 17th, 1556, he having died in the interval. We subjoin the greater part of it:

"First, I bequeath my soul to Almighty God, and to our blessed Lady St. Mary, and to all the holy company of heaven; and my body to be buried in the church-yard of St. John the Baptist in Aston aforesaid.

"Also, I give and bequeath to my youngest daughter Mary all my land in Wilmecote called Ashbies, and the crop upon the ground, sown and tilled as it is; and £6 13*s.* 4*d.* of money, to be paid or ere my goods be divided. Also, I give and bequeath to my daughter Alice the third part of all my goods, moveable and unmoveable, in field and town, after my debts and legacies be performed; besides that good she hath of her own at this time. Also, I give and bequeath to Agnes my wife £6 13*s.* 4*d.*, upon this condition, that she shall suffer my daughter Alice quietly to enjoy half my copyhold in Wilmecote during the time of her widowhood; and if she will not suffer my daughter Alice quietly to occupy half with her, then I will that my wife shall have but £3 6*s.* 8*d.*, and her jointure in Snitterfield.

"Item, the residue of all my goods, moveable and unmoveable, my funerals and my debts discharged, I give and bequeath to my other children, to be equally divided amongst them by the discretion of Adam Palmer, Hugh Porter, of Snitterfield, and John Scarlett, whom I do ordain and make my overseers of this my last will and testament; and they to have for their painstaking in this behalf 20*s.* a-piece. Also, I ordain and constitute and make my full executors Alice and Mary, my daughters, of this my last will and testament. Also, I give and bequeath to every house that hath no team in the parish of Aston 4*d.*"

It appears that Agnes Arden had a former husband named Hill; that her maiden name was Webbe; and that she was *not* the mother of any of Robert Arden's children. For in her will, which was proved March 31st, 1581, she makes a bequest "to my brotner Alexander Webbe's children;" also one "to John Fulwood, my son-in-law;" and the parish register of Aston Cantlow shows that John Fulwood and Mary Hill were married the 15th of November, 1561. Her will also makes bequests to divers other persons named Fulwood and Hill, especially to the children of John Fulwood and John Hill; but has no reference whatsoever to any of her second husband's children; from all which it would seem that there must have been some estrangement or coldness between her and them.

"Her jointure in Snitterfield," mentioned in the will of Robert Arden, was a portion that he settled upon her in 1550, as appears from an instrument signed and sealed by her on the 5th of July, 1580.[25] It was in this jointure, no doubt, that John and Mary Shakespeare held the reversionary interest which they sold out, as we have seen, to Robert Webbe for £40, in the spring of 1580. It may need to be observed, also, that the bequest of land in Wilmecote to Mary Arden does not mean *all* the land which the testator owned in Wilmecote, but merely all his estate there that

[25] This instrument, after specifying "two mesuages, one cottage, and all lands and tenements, with thappurtenaunces belonginge to the same, lyinge and being in Snitterfield," continues thus: "Of which sayd messuage and premisses estate was made to me the sayd Agnes for terme of my lyffe by Roberte Arden my late husband, in the fourth yeare of the raigne of the late King Edward the Sixt; of which sayd estate for terme of my lyffe I am yet seased." The description here made of the property, as will be seen, corresponds with that given in the preceding note. Probably Agnes Arden's jointure *included* the house and land occupied by Richard Shakespeare in 1550 and 1560; but, as these had been conveyed in trust for three other daughters, they clearly could *not* be included in that part of the jointure in which John and Mary Shakespeare held the reversionary interest mentioned in the text

was known by the name of Ashbies. The will afterwards refers to other property which he owned in Wilmecote by tenure of copyhold. On the whole, it is evident enough, that Robert Arden, though styling himself "husbandman" in 1550, was a man of good landed estate. Both he and Richard Shakespeare appear to have been of that honest and substantial old English yeomanry, from whose better-than-royal stock and lineage the great Poet of nature might most fitly fetch his life and being. Of William Shakespeare's grandmother on either side, we know nothing whatsoever. His father, so far as we may judge from the name, was of Anglo-Saxon descent. Arden, on the other hand, sounds like a Norman name; its first original being, perhaps, from that old forest in France, which breathes so much of genial freshness and delectation into the scenes of As You Like It. So that those two choice bloods were probably mingled in the Poet's veins.

The exact time of Mary Arden's marriage is uncertain, no registry of it having been found. Of course it must have been after the date of her father's will. Joan, the first child of John and Mary Shakespeare, was baptized in the parish church of Stratford-on-Avon, September 15th, 1558. We have seen that at this time John Shakespeare was well established and thriving in business, and was making good headway in the confidence of the Stratfordians, being one of the constables of the borough. On the 2d of December, 1562, while he was chamberlain, his second child was christened Margaret. She was buried, April 30th, 1563. On the 26th of April, 1564, was baptized "WILLIAM, SON OF JOHN SHAKESPEARE." The birth is commonly thought to have taken place on the 23d, it being then the usual custom to present infants at the Font three days after their birth: but the custom was often departed from, and we have no certain information whether it was observed on this august occasion. At this time the father was owner of two copyhold houses, and was probably living in one of them;

and until recently a house in Henley-street was pointed out by tradition as the Poet's place of birth. We have seen that throughout the following summer the destroyer was busy in Stratford, making fearful spoil of her sons and daughters; but it spared the babe on whose life hung the fate of English Literature. The year 1566 brought another son into the family, who was christened Gilbert on the 13th of October. We shall meet with him hereafter in connection with his brother William's affairs. In 1569, when the father was high bailiff, a third daughter was born to him, and was christened Joan on the 15th of April. From this repetition of the name, it is presumed with good cause that the first child had died, though no entry of her burial appears in the register. The second Joan lived to be a wife and a mother, as will be seen hereafter. On the 28th of September, 1571, twenty-three days after the father became head alderman, the fourth daughter was baptized Anne. Hitherto the register has known him only as John Shakespeare: in this case it designates him as "*Master* Shakespeare." Whether *Master* or *Magister* was a token of honour not extended to any thing under an ex-bailiff, does not appear; but in all cases after this the name is written in the register with that significant prefix. This Anne Shakespeare was buried, April 4th, 1579, and the sum of 8*d*. paid for the bell and pall at her funeral. "Richard, son to Mr. John Shakespeare," was carried to the Font, March 11th, 1574, and to the grave, February 4th, 1613. The giving of this name yields some further evidence, if such be wanted, that the Richard Shakespeare mentioned before was the Poet's grandfather. The list closes with the baptism, May 3d, 1580, of "Edmund, son to Mr. John Shakespeare."

Rowe, as may be seen in our Introduction, and some others after him, make the Poet to have been of a family of *ten* children, whereas our list numbers but eight. This arose, no doubt, from there having been another John Shakespeare in Stratford, who was a shoemaker. Rowe's

reckoning includes but one Joan, and adds three others, Ursula, Humphrey, and Philip, thus making the number ten. John Shakespeare the shoemaker is first met with in the corporation books as a burgess present at a hall in March 1580. In September, 1585, he was elected one of the constables, and in October following was sworn as one of the ale-tasters. The chamberlain's accounts for 1586 have the entry, — "Received of Shakespeare the shoemaker for his freedom, the 19th day of January, 30*s*." In 1587 he is found availing himself of what was known as Oken's Charity, a loan of £5, to be employed in his business; which shows him to have been both poor and young, these being conditions required by Oken's will.[26] Divers other instances of his name are found, but generally with "shoemaker" added, and never with the handle *Master* attached to it. Margery his wife, to whom he was married in November, 1584, was buried in October, 1587. It appears, however, that he was not long in "taking to himself another mate," the following baptisms being noted in the parish-register: March 11th, 1589, "Ursula, daughter to John Shake-

[26] The Stratford records furnish the following: "At a hall there holden the xvii.th daie of Febuarie, anno xxix.th dominæ reginæ Elizabeth, &c., Thomas Okens money was delivered to the personnes whose names are underwritten, to be emploied accordinge to the last will and testament of the saide Thomas." In the list of names underwritten we have this: "John Shaxpere v.*li.*, his suerties Richard Sponer et Roberte Yonge." — From the Black Book in the Corporation Archives, Warwick, it appears that Thomas Oken, of Warwick, in his will dated Nov. 24th, 1570, gave £40 to Stratford-on-Avon, "to bestow and deliver the said somme of fourtie poundes to divers yong occupiers of the same towne of Stretford upon Avon in lone, in maner and forme following; That is to say, unto eight such honest yong men dwelling within the same towne, that be of some honest mistery or craft, and householders within the same town, being also of good name, fame, and conversacion with their neighbors in the same towne; That is to say, to every such one of the said eight yong men the somme of five poundes, by the waye of loane, to be occupied by him and them in their said craftes or mysteries during the space of foure yeres."

speare;" May 24th, 1590, "Humphrey, son to John Shakespeare;" September 21st, 1591, "Philip, son to John Shakespeare." And so his name "is condemned to everlasting redemption," the fault of his parents making it necessary thus to immortalize the worthy man.

Nothing further is heard of MRS. MARY SHAKESPEARE till her death in 1608. On the 9th of September, that year, the parish-register notes the burial of "Mary Shakespeare, widow," her husband having died seven years before. That she had in a special degree the confidence and affection of her father, is apparent from the treatment she received in his will. There are few chapters in human history, the loss of which were more to be regretted, than that which should have let us into the domestic life and character of the great Poet's mother. Both the mother's nature and the mother's discipline must, no doubt, have entered largely into his composition, and had a principal share in making him what he was. Whatsoever of woman's beauty and sweetness and wisdom were expressed in her life and manners, could not but be caught and repeated in his most susceptive and most fertile nature. At the time of her death, the Poet was in his forty-fifth year, and had already produced those mighty works that were to fill the world with his fame. For some years, she must, in all likelihood, have been more or less under his care and protection, as her age, at the time of her death, could not well have been less than seventy. She probably never realized that she had given birth to the greatest of men: she must have been a remarkable woman indeed, to have understood at that time what a miracle of wisdom and wit had issued from her. The world is under great, very great obligation to her. There is little danger of her being ever forgotten. All the kings and queens that have lived are but dust in the balance, compared to the MOTHER of WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

CHAPTER II.

FROM THE BIRTH OF SHAKESPEARE TILL HE ENTERED THE THEATRE.

In the preceding chapter we have dwelt somewhat minutely, perhaps too much so, on the history of John Shakespeare, as gathered from legal documents and public records, with the view of throwing whatsoever light were possible to be thrown on the circumstances and opportunities of the Poet's boyhood and youth. We have seen him springing from what may be justly termed the best vein of old English life. At the time of his birth, his parents, considering the purchases previously made by the father, and the fortune inherited by the mother, must have been tolerably well to do in the world. The "land in Wilmecote called Ashbies" was an estate in fee, consisting of a messuage, fifty acres of arable land, six acres of meadow and pasture, and a right of common for all kinds of cattle. Malone, reckoning only the bequests specified in her father's will, estimated Mary Shakespeare's fortune to be not less than £110, which Mr. Collier deems "an under calculation of its actual value." Later researches, as we have seen, have brought to light considerable sources of income that were unknown to Malone. Supposing her fortune to have been as good as £150 then, it would go nearly if not quite as far as $5000 in our time. So that the Poet must have passed his boyhood in just about that medium state between poverty and riches, but, of the two, rather verging towards its upper limit, which is accounted most favourable to health of body and mind.

At the time of his father's becoming high bailiff of Stratford, William was in his fifth year; old enough, no doubt

to understand something of what would naturally be said and done in the home and at the fireside of an English magistrate, and to take more or less interest in the duties, the hospitalities, and perhaps the gayeties, incident to the headship of the borough. It would seem that the Poet came honestly by his inclination towards the drama. During his term of office, John Shakespeare is found acting in his public capacity as a patron of the stage. The chamberlain's accounts for that year show at one time 9*s.* "paid to the Queen's players," and at another time 12*d.* "to the Earl of Worcester's players;" and these are the earliest notices we have of theatrical performances in that ancient town. What particular course the bailiff and the players took on these occasions, is not known; but R. Willis, who was born the same year as our Poet, gives, in his Mount Tabor, 1639, the following curious reminiscence:

"UPON A STAGE-PLAY WHICH I SAW WHEN I WAS A CHILD.

"In the city of Gloucester the manner is, (as I think it is in other like corporations,) that when players of interludes come to town, they first attend the Mayor, to inform him what nobleman's servants they are, and so to get licence for their public playing; and if the mayor like the actors, or would show respect to their lord and master, he appoints them to play their first play before himself and the aldermen and common council of the city; and that is called the mayor's play, where every one that will comes without money, the mayor giving the players a reward as he thinks fit, to show respect unto them. At such a play my father took me with him, and made me stand between his legs, as he sat upon one of the benches, where we saw and heard very well. The play was called The Cradle of Security, wherein was personated a king or some great prince with his courtiers of several kinds, amongst which three ladies were in special grace with him; and they, keeping him in

delights and pleasures, drew him from his graver counsellors, hearing of sermons, and listening to good counsel and admonitions; that in the end they got him to lie down in a cradle upon the stage, where these three ladies, joining in a sweet song, rocked him asleep, that he snorted again; and in the mean time closely conveyed under the clothes, wherewithal he was covered, a vizard like a swine's snout upon his face, with three wire chains fastened thereunto, the other end whereof being holden severally by those three ladies, who fell to singing again, and then discovered his face, that the spectators might see how they had transformed him going on with their singing. . . . This sight took such impression in me, that when I came towards man's estate it was as fresh in my memory as if I had seen it newly acted."

Gloucester being not more than a day's ride from Stratford, much the same custom which we here see in use at the former place was probably used at the latter when the first companies acted there. So that the bailiff and his son William were most likely present at those performances. From this time forward all through the Poet's youth, probably no year passed without similar exhibitions at Stratford, though we hear of no more players there till 1573, when the account-books show an entry of 5*s.* 8*d.* "paid to Mr. Bailiff for the Earl of Leicester's players." In 1576 we have notes of similar donations to the companies of the Earls of Warwick and Worcester; and so on, continually, from that period till some years after the time of the Poet's quitting Stratford.[1] Such were the opportunities our embryo Poet

[1] We subjoin from the chamberlains' accounts a number of entries, showing to what extent Stratford was favoured with players' visits:

1577. "Paid to my lord of Leyster players . . . . xv. *s*
"Paid to my lord of Wosters players . . iii. *s.* iiii. *d.*
1579. "Paid at the commandment of Mr. Baliffe to the Countys of Essex plears . . . . . xiiii. *s.* vi. *d.*
1580. "Paid to the Earle of Darbyes players at the commaundment of Mr. Baliffe . . . . . viii. *s.* iiii. *d.*

had for catching the first rudiments of that art in which he afterwards displayed such learned mastery. The subject will needs be recurred to when we come to discuss the probable date and probable causes of the Poet's first connexion with the theatre.

The same accounts show an entry, in 1564, of 2*s.* "paid for defacing image in the chapel." Even then the excesses generated out of the Reformation, and rendered fierce by the scarce-extinct fires of Smithfield, were invading such towns as Stratford, and inaugurating a "crusade against the harmless monuments of the ancient belief, no exercise of taste being suffered to interfere with what was considered a religious duty." In those exhibitions of strolling players, especially as in course of time abuses crept in, this spirit found matter, no doubt, more deserving of its enmity. While the Poet was yet a boy, a bitter war of books and pamphlets had begun against plays and players; and the Stratford records inform us of divers early attempts to suppress them in that town; but the issue proves that the Stratfordians were not easily beaten from this species of entertainment, in which they evidently took great delight.[2]

1581. "Paid to the Earle of Worcester his players iii. *s.* iiii. *d*
"Paid to the L. Bartlett his players . . . iii. *s.* ii. *d*
1582. "Paid to Henry Russell for the Earle of Worcesters players . . . . . v. *s.*
1583. "Payd to Mr. Alderman that he layd downe to the Lord Bartlite his players, and to a preacher v. *s.*
"Payd to the Lord Shandowes players . iii. *s.* iiii. *d.*
1584. "Geven to my lord of Oxfordes pleers . iii. *s.* iiii. *d.*
"Geven to the Earle of Worceter pleers . iii. *s.* iiii. *d.*
"Geven to the Earle of Essex pleers . . iii. *s.* viii. *d.*
1586. "Paide to Mr. Tiler for the pleyers . . . . v. *s.*
1587. "Paid for mendinge of a forme that was broken by the Quenes players . . . . . xvi. *d*
"Gyven to the Quenes players . . . . . xx. *s.*
"Gyven to my Lo. of Essex players . . . . v. *s*
"Gyven to therle of Leycester his players . . . x. *s*
"Gyven to another company . . . . iii. *s.* iiii. *d*
"Gyven to my Lo. of Staffordes men . iii. *s.* iiii. *d.*"

[2] The year 1602 furnishes the following: "17 Decembe:, 45

The account-books quoted above furnish notices of various other events and customs which bore a part in the Poet's early education. We have entries, in 1570, of sums paid "to Humphrey Getley for mending of the stocks," and "to the smith for iron-work of the same stocks;" facts that infer suitable precedents for what brave Kent is made to undergo in King Lear. Entries also there are, showing that the cucking-stool, that ancient engine for taming female shrews and scolds, was kept in repair and ready for use.[3] An entry, in 1577, of 4*s*., "paid when the muster was here for a gallon and half of sack;" and one, May 20th, 1584, of "a church-ale granted to be kept by the church-warden;" refer us to other sources of delight and instruction for the growing youth. Entries touching the bowling-alleys and the butts inform us that these were among the favourite places of amusement. What means were in use for appeasing the anger or conciliating the favour of the rich and powerful, is shown by an entry of 18*d*. "paid for wine, sugar, and cakes, to make Sir Fulk Greville drink," and of 40*s*. "paid to Sir Fulk Greville for nothing;" also, of 3*s*. "for sack and claret wine for Sir Thomas Lucy and my Lady and Mr. Sheriff at the Swan;" of 6*s*. 10*d*. "for wine and sugar bestowed on Sir Edward Greville at the Swan;" and of 2*s*. 2*d*. "for wine and sugar when my Lady Greville came to see our sport." How new friendships were used to be made, or broken ones mended, appears from entries of 4*s*. "paid Mrs.

Eliz. At this hall yt is ordred, that there shall be no plays or interludes played in the Chamber, the Guildhall, nor in any parte of the howse or courte, from hensforward, upon payne, that whoever of the Baylif, Aldermen, or Burgesses of the Boroughe shall give leave or license thereunto, shall forfeyt for everie offence — x. *s*." Other orders still more stringent were passed from time to time; still we find, in 1617, an entry of 5*s*. paid by "Mr. Bayliff's ap poyntment to a company of players."

[3] 1576. "Paid for mendinge the docke stoole two elles xii. *d*.
"Paid for the stoll and thinges to mend it withal vi. *d*.
"Paid for a cocke for to sett on the stoole . viii. *d*.
1617. "For ii. trees for the cookstoole . . . . xi. *s*."

Quiney for wine to the chamber in making Mr. Baker and Mr. Smith friends," and of 3*s.* 4*d.* "paid at Mrs. Quiney's when Mr. Rogers and Mr. Wright were made friends." Many other very curious and edifying entries are here found, a considerable list of which is given by Halliwell.[4]

We have seen that both John and Mary Shakespeare, instead of writing their name, were so far disciples of Jack Cade as to use the more primitive way of making their mark. It nowise follows from this that they could not read; neither, on the other hand, have we any certain evidence that they could. Be that as it may, there was no reason why their children should not be able to say, "I thank

[4] The reader may be glad to find some of the more curious ones in a note:

1578. "Item, to John Smith for a pottell of wine and a quarterne of sugar for Sir Thomas Lucy . . xvi. *d.*

1584. "Paid for a quart of secke, a pottell of claret wyne, a quarterne of sugar, for Sir Thomas Lucy knight ii. *s.* i *d.*

1586. "Paid for wine and sugar when Sir Thomas Lucie satt in comission for tipplers . . . . . xx. *d.*

1594. "Item, at the eatinge of Mr. Grevilles bucke the keepers fee and horse hire . . . . . xxx. *s.* vi. *d.*

"Item, a bankett at the Beare for Mr. Grevill xxxiii. *s.* ii. *d.*

1597. "Payd for a sugerlofe to send to Sur Foke Grivill the 20. of January, 11 li. 9 ounces, at xvi. *d.* a pound xv. *s.* v. *d.*

1598. "To Jhon Whittcoott iiii. dayes worcke at 9 *d.* daye iii. *s.*

"Bald Hughes for xi. dayes at 9 *d.* . . viii. *s.* iii. *d.*

1604. "Item, we do present the greatest part of the inhabyiants of this towne for wearing theyr repariell contrary to the statut.

1606. "Item, to Spenser for joistes for the scolehouse and for work about the same . . . . . iiii. *s.* ix. *d.*

1608. "Paied Richard Stanell for tiling the fre skole xxv. *s*

1617. "For a quart of sack sent to Mr. Cooper, a preacher i. *s.*

"Payde for a quarte of sacke and a quart of clareet wyne beestowed of Mr. Harris for his sermon made heire . . . . . xx. *d*"

God, I have been so well brought up, that I can write my name." A Free School had been founded at Stratford by Thomas Jolyffe in the reign of Edward IV. In 1553, King Edward the Sixth granted a charter, giving it a legal being, with legal rights and duties, and ordering it to be called "The King's New School of Stratford-upon-Avon."[5] What particular course or method of instruction was used in this school we have no certain knowledge; but it was probably much the same as that used in other like schools of that period; which included the elementary branches of English, and also the rudiments of classical, learning. The master of the school had a salary of £20 a year; and, sometimes at least, an assistant with £10 a year.[6] Latin was taught in all the free schools of any note in that period. Dr. Simon Forman, the dealer in occult science quoted in our Introductions to The Winter's Tale and Cymbeline, says of an ignorant minister, that "he could read English well, but he could no Latin more than the single accidence; and that he learned of his two sons that went daily to a free school."

Here it was, no doubt, that Shakespeare acquired the

[5] The following is part of the Charter: "We, by virtue of these presents, erect, ordain, and establish a certain free grammar school, in the said town of Stratford-upon-Avon, to consist of one master or teacher, hereafter for ever to endure, and so we will and command by these presents to be established and inviolably to be observed for ever; and that the said school shall for ever be commonly styled *The King's New School of Stratford-upon-Avon*; and that in the same school there shall be a master or pedagogue to be named and appointed from time to time by the Lords of the Borough for the time being; which master or pedagogue shall be called by the name of Master or Pedagogue of the Free School of Stratford-upon-Avon."

[6] Mr. Halliwell gives the following from a manuscript at Carlton Ride: "Memorandum, there is a vicare and a scolemaster that have a stipend of xx. *li.* by the yere granted by the King to eyther of them, and the bailief and burgesses of Stratford are to pay the same yerelie stipendes out of the landes that were geven them by the King." In 1585, Sir William Gilbert was assistant master at £10 a year.

"small Latin and less Greek" which Ben Jonson accords to him. What was "small" learning in the eye of so great a scholar as Jonson, may yet have been something very handsome in itself; and his remark would seem to imply that the Poet had, at least, the regular free-school education of the time. His father being a member of the corporation, the tuition would cost him nothing. Honourably ambitious, as he seems to have been, of being somebody, it is not unlikely he may have prized learning the more for being himself without it. William was his oldest son; when his tide of fortune began to ebb, the Poet was in his fourteenth year; and from the native qualities of his mind, we cannot doubt that, up to that time at least, "all the learnings that his *town* could make him the receiver of, he took, as we do air, fast as 'twas minister'd, and in his spring became a harvest." Of his professional teachers, supposing him to have attended the school, nothing is known except the names: between 1570 and 1578, the place of master was held successively by Walter Roche, Thomas Hunt, and Thomas Jenkins.

The honest but credulous old gossip Aubrey, who died about the year 1700, states, on the authority of one Mr. Beeston, that Shakespeare "understood Latin pretty well, for he had been in his younger years a school-master in the country;" and Mr. Collier thinks it possible that, being a young man of abilities, and quick to acquire knowledge, he may have been employed by Jenkins to aid him in teaching the younger boys. He adds the following in reference to Aubrey's statement: "As persons of the name of Beeston were connected with the theatres before the death of Shakespeare, and long afterwards, we ought to treat the assertion with the more respect. Simon Forman, according to his Diary, was employed in this way in the free school where he was educated, and was paid by the parents of the boys for his assistance.[7] The same might be the case with Shakespeare."

[7] The following is from his Diary: "Simon, percevinge his

Possible this may indeed be, and that is perhaps the best can be said of it. Much more likely, it seems to us, is the account of Rowe, though there is no incompatibility between the two: "He had bred him, it is true, for some time at the free school, where it is probable he acquired what Latin he was master of; but the narrowness of his circumstances, and the want of his assistance at home forced his father to withdraw him from thence, and unhappily prevented his further proficiency in that language." Rowe, to be sure, wrote, as we have seen, from tradition, and not till upwards of ninety years after the Poet's death; but he was evidently careful, his sources appear to have been good, and what he says is credible in itself, and accords perfectly with what later researches have established respecting John Shakespeare's course of fortune. He also tells us that the Poet's father "could give him no better education than his own employment." It has been shown, that as early as 1579 his father was legally designated as "John Shakespeare, of Stratford-upon-Avon in the county of Warwick, *yeoman*." Nor are we sure but the ancient functions of an English yeoman's oldest son might be a better education for what the Poet afterwards accomplished, than was to be had in any free school or university in England. From his apt and frequent use of legal terms and phrases, Malone and Collier are strongly of the opinion that he must have spent some time as clerk or apprentice to some one of the seven attorneys then at Stratford. This, too, is doubtless possible enough: but such evidence cannot pass for much; for he shows an

mother wold doe nothinge for him, was dryven to great extremity and hunger, gave off to be a scoller any longer for lacke of maintenance, and, at the priorie of St. Jilles wher he himself was firste a scoller, ther became he a scolmaster, and taught some thirty boies, and their parents among them gave him moste parte of his diet. And the money he gote he kept, to the some of som 40*s*., and after folowinge, when he had bin scolmaster som halfe yere, and had 40*s*. in his purse, he wente to Oxford for to get more lernınge, and soe left off from being scolmaster."

equal or nearly equal, familiarity with the technicalities of various callings; and it seems nowise unlikely that his skill in the law may have grown from the large part his father had, either as magistrate or as litigant, in legal transactions.

Knight has speculated rather copiously and romantically upon the idea of Shakespeare having been a spectator of the more-than-royal pomp and pagentry with which the Queen was entertained by Leicester at Kenilworth in 1575. Stratford was fourteen miles from Kenilworth, and the Poet was then eleven years old. That his ears were assailed and his imagination excited by the fame of that august and magnificent display, cannot be doubted; for all that part of the country was laid under contribution to supply it, and was resounding with the noise of it; but his father was not of a rank to be summoned or invited thither, nor was he of an age to go thither without his father. Positive historical evidence either way on the point there is none; nor can we discover any thing in his plays but what he might have learned well enough without drinking in the splendour of that occasion, however the fierce attractions thereof may have haunted a mind so brimful of poetry and life. The whole subject is an apt field for speculation, and for nothing else.

The gleanings of tradition excepted, the first knowledge that has reached us of the Poet, after his baptism, has reference to his marriage. Rowe states that "he thought fit to marry while he was yet very young," and that "his wife was the daughter of one Hathaway, said to have been a substantial yeoman in the neighbourhood of Stratford;" and later disclosures prove that Rowe must have had access to good sources of information. The marriage took place in the fall of 1582, when the Poet was in his nineteenth year. On the 28th of November, that year, Fulk Sandels and John Richardson subscribed a bond whereby they became liable in the sum of £40, to be forfeited to the Bishop of Worcester, in case there should be found any lawful impediment to

the marriage of William Shakespeare and ANNE HATHAWAY, of Stratford; the object being, to procure such a dispensation from the Bishop as would authorise the ceremony after once publishing the banns. The original bond is preserved at Worcester, with the marks and seals of the two bondsmen affixed, and also bearing a seal with the initials R. H., as if to show that the bride's father, Richard Hathaway, was present and consenting to the act.[8] Mr. Collier says, — "It is not to be concealed, or denied. that the whole proceeding seems to indicate haste and secrecy;" where-

[8] We subjoin the document from Mr. Halliwell, who says the copy was carefully made from the original:

"Noverint universi per præsentes nos Fulconem Sandells de Stratford in comitatu Warwici, agricolam, et Johannem Rychardson ibidem, agricolam, teneri et firmiter obligari Ricardo Cosin, generoso, et Roberto Warmstry, notario publico, in quadraginta libris bonæ et legalis monetæ Angliæ solvendis eisdem Ricardo et Roberto, hæredibus, executoribus, vel assignatis suis, ad quam quidem solutionem bene et fideliter faciendam obligamus nos, et utrumque nostrum, per se pro toto et in solido, hæredes, executores, et administratores nostros firmiter per præsentes, sigillis nostris sigillatos. Datum 28 die Novembris, anno Regni Dominæ nostræ Eliz., &c., 25th.

"The condicion of this obligacion ys suche, that if herafter there shall not appere any lawfull lett or impediment, &c., but that William Shagspere one thone partie, and Anne Hathwey, of Stratford in the dioces of Worcester, maiden, may lawfully solemnize matrimony together, and in the same afterwardes remaine and continew like man and wiffe, according unto the lawes in that behalf provided; and moreover, if there be not at this present time any action, sute, quarrell, or demaund, moved or depending before any judge, ecclesiasticall or temporall, for and concerning any suche lawfull lett or impediment; and moreover, if the said William Shagspere do not proceed to solemnizacion of mariadg with the said Anne Hathwey without the consent of hir frindes; and also, if the said William do, upon his owne proper costes and expenses, defend and save harmles the right reverend Father in God, Lord John Bushop of Worcester, and his offycers, for licencing them the said William and Anne to be maried together with once asking of the bannes of matrimony betweene them, and for all other causes which may ensue by reason or occasion thereof; that then the said obligacion to be voyd and of none effect, or els to stand and abide in full force and vertue."

upon Mr. Halliwell, writing more advisedly, has the following: "There is no peculiarity to be observed in it, nor can I agree with Mr. Collier that 'the whole proceeding seems to indicate haste and secrecy.' In fact, the bond is exactly similar to those which were usually granted on such occasions; and several others of a like kind are to be seen in the office of the Worcester registry. It is necessary in these discussions to pay attention to the ordinary usages of the period; and the more minutely we examine them, the less necessity will there be in this case for suggesting any insinuation against the character of the Poet."

The parish books all about Stratford and Worcester have been ransacked, but no registry of the marriage has been discovered. The probability seems to be, that the ceremony took place in some one of the neighbouring parishes, perhaps Weston or Billesley or Luddington, where the registers of that period have not been preserved. Anne Hathaway was of Shottery, a pleasant village situate within an easy walk of Stratford, and belonging to the same parish. No registry of her baptism has come to light; but the baptismal register of Stratford did not commence till 1558. She died on the 6th of August, 1623, and the inscription on her monument informs us that she was sixty-seven years of age. Her birth, therefore, must have occurred in 1556, eight years before that of her husband.

It appears, from old subsidy rolls, that there were Hathaways living at Shottery before 1550. And among the "debts which are owing unto me," specified in the will of Roger Sadler, 1578, quoted in note 16 of the preceding chapter, is one "of Richard Hathaway, *alias* Gardiner, of Shottery," £6 8*s*. 4*d*. This Hathaway had several children born after the beginning of the Stratford register, and their baptisms are duly entered. But the best information we have of him is from his will, which was lately discovered by Mr. Halliwell, and is printed at length in his Life of the Poet. It was made September 1st, 1581, and proved July

9th, 1582, which shows that the testator died in the interval; and its contents fully bear out Rowe's statement of his being "a substantial yeoman." He makes bequests to Joan his wife, to Bartholomew his oldest son, also born before the commencement of the Stratford register, and to six other children, named Thomas, John, William, Agnes, Catharine, and Margaret. He makes no mention of Anne, neither does he of Joan, another daughter, born in 1566; probably because he thought them well enough provided for in other quarters. He appoints his wife sole executrix, desires his "trusty friends and neighbours, Stephen Burman and Fulk Sandels to be supervisors" of his will; and among the witnesses are the names of William Gilbert, curate of Stratford, John Richardson and John Heminge. He had the advantage of John Shakespeare in one respect, at least: he could write his name.

One item of the will is,—"I owe unto Thomas Whittington, my shepherd, £4 6*s*. 8*d*." Whittington died in 1601, and in his will, also found by Mr. Halliwell, we have the following: "I give and bequeathe, unto the poor people of Stratford 40*s*. that is in the hand of Anne Shakespeare, wife unto Mr. William Shakespeare, and is due debt unto me, being paid to mine executor by the said William Shakespeare or his assigns, according to the true meaning of this my will." The good careful old shepherd had doubtless placed the 40*s*. in Anne Shakespeare's hand for safe keeping, she being a person in whom he had confidence.

At a later period, Bartholomew Hathaway is found in possession of the Shottery estate; and when he died, in 1624, Dr. Hall, the Poet's son-in-law, was one of the overseers of his will. And Lady Barnard, the Poet's grand-daughter, in her will, 1669, makes liberal bequests to Judith, Joan, Rose, Elizabeth, and Susanna, daughters of her "kinsman Thomas Hathaway, late of Stratford," who was most likely a nephew of Anne Shakespeare.

In respect of the Poet's marriage, Mr. Halliwell has the

following remarks, which seem so just in themselves, and so illustrative of the case, that we doubt not the reader will more than excuse us for adding them:

"The late Captain Saunders discovered two precepts in the papers of the Court of Record at Stratford, dated in 1566, which appear to exhibit Richard Hathaway and John Shakespeare on friendly terms. These precepts were issued on the same day on which the brief abstracts are dated in the registry of the court; and while the plaintiffs are respectively the same in the abstracts and precepts, the name of John Shakespeare is substituted in each instance in the latter for Richard Hathaway. Although I have not met with any similar instances, yet the only method of explanation is to conclude that Shakespeare became security for Hathaway. It appears that the *distringas* in each case was afterwards withdrawn.[9]

"This evidence is very important in the question that has been raised respecting the father of Anne Hathaway. The intimacy which probably existed between Richard Hathaway and John Shakespeare at once explains the means through which the two families became connected. The bond sufficiently proves that the marriage must have taken place

[9] The following are copies of them, superfluities omitted:

"11 Sept. 8 Eliz. Johannes Page queritur versus Ricardum Hatheway de placito detencionis &c. ad valenc. octo librarum. — Johanna Byddoll queritur versus Ricardum Hatheway de placito detencionis, &c. ad valenc. xi. *li.*

"Preceptum est servientibus ad clavem quod distr. seu unus vestrum distr. Johannem Shakespere per omnia bona et cattala sua, ita quod sit apud proximam curiam de recordo tent. ibidem ad respondend. Johanni Page de placito debiti, &c. Datum sub sigillo meo xi. mo die Septembris, anno regni Dominæ Elizabethæ, &c. octavo.

"Preceptum est servientibus ad clavem quod distr. seu unus vestrum distr. Johannem Shakespere per omnia bona et cattala sua, ita quod sit apud proximam curiam de recordo tent. ibidem ad respondendum Johanni Byddele de placito debiti, &c. Datum sub sigillo meo xi. mo die Septembris, anno regni Dominæ Elizabethæ, &c., octavo."

with the consent of the Hathaways; and the bride's father was most likely present when Sandels and Richardson executed the bond, for one of the seals has the initials R. H. upon it. There can be little doubt that the connexion also met with the approval of Shakespeare's parents, for there was no disparity of means or station to occasion their dissent, and the difference between their ages was not sufficient to raise it into any reasonable obstacle. Nothing can be more erroneous than the conclusions generally drawn from the marriage-bond. Anne Hathaway is there described as of Stratford; but so are the two bondsmen, who were respectable neighbours of the Hathaways of Shottery. They are mentioned together as being bail for a party, in the registry of the Court of Record.[10] Thus we find that the entire transaction was conducted under the care of Anne Hathaway's neighbours and friends. It has been said that Sandels and Richardson were rude, unlettered husbandmen, unfitted to attend a poet's bridal. They could not, it is true, write their own names, but neither could Shakespeare's father, nor many of the principal inhabitants of Stratford. Richardson was a substantial farmer, as appears from an inventory of his goods made in 1594, his friend Sandels being one of the persons engaged in its compilation. The original is preserved at Stratford."[11]

[10] The entry is as follows: "26 April, 29 Eliz. Elizabethe Smythe, vidua, attachiata fuit per servientes ad clavam ibidem ad respondendum Roberto Parrett in placito debiti, Johannes Richardson de Shottrey et Fulcus Sandells de Shottrey præd. m. pro prædicta Elizabethe, &c., concord."

[11] The Inventory is given in full by Halliwell, and fully bears out the statement that "Richardson was a substantial farmer," the sum total of his goods being set down as £87 3*s*. 8*d*. It is prefaced as follows: "The tru inventory of the goodes and chattells of John Richardsons, late of Shottre in the perish of Stratford upon Avon, in the countye of Warwycke, decessed; taken the iiii. th day of November, 1594, and in the xxxvi. th yeare of the raygne of our soverayne Lady Elizabeth, &c., and by the dyscretyon of Mr. John Gibbs, Mr. John Burman, Fowcke Sandells and John Barber."

The Poet's match was evidently a love-match: whether the love were of that kind which forms the best pledge of wedded happiness, is another question. It seems not unlikely that the marriage may have been preceded by the ancient ceremony of troth-plight, or *handfast*, as it was sometimes called; like that which all but takes place between Florizell and Perdita in Act iv. sc. 3, of The Winter's Tale, and quite takes place between Olivia and Sebastian in Twelfth Night, Act iv. sc. 3; and which the Priest there officiating describes thus:

> "A contract of eternal bond of love,
> Confirm'd by mutual joinder of your hands,
> Attested by the holy close of lips,
> Strengthen'd by interchangement of your rings;
> And all the ceremony of this compact
> Seal'd in my function, by my testimony."[12]

The custom of troth-plight was much used in that age and for a long time after. In some places it had the force and effect of an actual marriage; and if the parties were formally united within a reasonable time their reputation stood perfectly clear, whatever may have happened in the interim. Evils, however, often grew out of it; and the Church has done wisely, no doubt, in uniting the troth-plight and the marriage in one and the same ceremony.[13] Whether such

[12] The Poet has several other instances of the like solemn betrothment, as in the cases of Claudio and Juliet, and of Angelo and Mariana, in Measure for Measure. See, also, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Act ii. sc. 2, note 1. What liberties it conferred, may be judged from the language used by the jealous Leontes in The Winter's Tale, Act i. sc. 2:

> "My wife's a hobby-horse; deserves a name
> As rank as any flax-wench, *that puts to*
> *Before her troth-plight.*"

[13] Brand, in his Popular Antiquities, speaks thus of the custom: "There was a remarkable kind of marriage-contract among the ancient Danes called *hand-festing*. Strong traces of this remain in our villages in many parts of the kingdom. I have been more than once assured from credible authority on Portland Island, that something very like it is still practised there very gen

solemn betrothment had or had not taken place between William Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway, it is certain from the parish register, that they had a daughter, Susanna, baptized on the 26th of May, 1583, not quite six months after the date of the marriage-bond.

Some of the Poet's later biographers and critics have taken it upon them to suppose that he was not happy in his marriage. Certain passages in his plays, especially the charming dialogue between the Duke and the disguised Viola in Act ii. sc. 4, of Twelfth Night, have been cited as involving some reference to the Poet's own case, or as suggested by what himself had experienced of the evils resulting from the wedlock of persons "misgraffed in respect of years." There was never any thing but mere conjecture for this notion. Rowe mentions nothing of the kind, and we may be sure that his candour would not have spared the Poet, had tradition offered him any such matter. As for the passages in his plays, we cannot discover the slightest reason for supposing that the Poet had any other than a purely dramatic purpose in them. That Shakespeare was more or less separated from his wife for a number of years, cannot indeed be questioned; but that he ever found or sought any relief or comfort in such separation, is what we have no warrant for believing. It was simply forced upon

erally, where the inhabitants seldom or never intermarry with any on the mainland, and where the young women, selecting lovers of the same place, account it no disgrace to allow them every favour, and that, too, from the fullest confidence of being made wives the moment such consequences of their stolen embraces begin to be too visible to be any longer concealed." And he adds the following from the Christian State of Matrimony, 1543: "Yet in thys thynge also must I warne everye reasonable and honest parson to beware, that in contractyng of maryage they dyssemble not, nor set forthe any lye. Every man lykewyse must esteme the parson to whom he is *hand-fasted*, none otherwyse than for his owne spouse, though as yet it be not done in the church ner in the streate. After the hand-fastynge and makyng of the contracte, the churchgoyng and weddyng shuld not be differred too longe, lest the wyckedde sowe hys ungraciour sede in the meane season."

him by the necessities of his condition. The darling object of his London life evidently was, as will be seen hereafter, that he might return to his native town with a handsome competence, and dwell in the bosom of his family; and the yearly visits, which tradition reports him to have made to Stratford, look like any thing but a wish to forget them or be forgotten by them. From what is known of his subsequent course, it is certain that he had in large measure that honourable ambition, so natural to an English gentleman, of becoming the founder of a family; and as soon as he had reached the hope of doing so, he retired to his old home, and there set up his rest, as if his best sunshine of life still waited on the presence of her from whose society he is alleged to have fled away in disappointment and disgust.

To Anne Hathaway, we have little doubt, were addressed, in his early morn of love, the three Sonnets playing on the author's name, numbered cxxxv., cxxxvi., and cxliii. as originally printed. These have indeed very little merit; they are framed with too much art, or else with too little, to express any real passion; in short, both the matter and the style of them are hardly good enough to have been his at any time, certainly none too good to have been the work of his boyhood. And we have seen no conjecture on the point that bears greater likelihoods of truth, than that another three, far different in merit, the xcvii., xcviii., and xcix., were addressed, much later in life, to the same object. The prevailing tone and imagery of them are such as he would hardly have used but with a woman in his thoughts; they are full-fraught with deep personal feeling as distinguished from mere exercises of fancy; and they speak, with unsurpassable tenderness, of frequent absences, such as, before the Sonnets were first printed, the Poet had experienced from the wife of his bosom. We feel morally certain that she was the inspirer of them. And we are scarcely less persuaded, that a third cluster, from the cix. to the cxvii., in

clusive, had the same source. These, too, are clearly concerned with the deeper interests and regards of private life; they carry a homefelt energy and fulness of pathos, such as argue them to have had a far other origin than in trials of art; they speak of compelled absences from the object that inspired them, and are charged with regrets and confessions, such as could only have sprung from the Poet's own breast: and when he says, —

> 'Accuse me thus: That I have scanted all
> Wherein I should your great deserts repay;
> Forgot upon your dearest love to call,
> *Whereto all bonds do tie me day by day;*
> That I have frequent been with unknown minds,
> And given to time *your own dear-purchas'd right*," —

it will take more than has yet appeared, to persuade us that his thoughts were travelling anywhere but home to the bride of his youth and mother of his children.

On the 2d of February, 1585, two more children, twins, were christened in the parish church as "Hamnet and Judith, son and daughter to William Shakespeare." Malone conjectured that Hamnet Sadler and Judith his wife, who were neighbours and friends of the Poet, may have stood sponsors to the infants, and hence the names. The conjecture is not improbable. Tradition apart, this is the last we hear of the Poet, till he is found a sharer in the Blackfriars theatre in London.

As might be expected, tradition has been busy with the probable causes of his betaking himself to the stage. Several reasons have been assigned for the act, such as, first, a natural inclination to poetry and acting; second, a deer-stealing frolic, which resulted in making Stratford too hot for him; third, the pecuniary embarrassments of his father. It is not unlikely that all these causes, and perhaps others, may have concurred in putting him upon the step.

For the first, we have the clear and credible testimony of Aubrey, whom Malone supposes to have been in Stratford

about 1580. Aubrey was an arrant and inveterate hunter after anecdotes, and seems to have caught up and noted down, without sifting or scrutiny, whatever quaint or curious matter came in his way. Of course, therefore, no great reliance can attach to what he says, unless it be sustained by other strength than his authority. In this case, his words sound like truth, and are supported by all the likelihoods that can grow from what we must presume to have been the Poet's natural complexion of mind. "This William," says he, "being inclined naturally to poetry and acting, came to London, I guess about eighteen, and was an actor at one of the play-houses, and did act exceedingly well. He began early to make essays at dramatic poetry, which at that time was very low, and his plays took well. He was a handsome, well-shap'd man, very good company, and of a very ready and pleasant smoothe wit. The humour of the constable, in Midsummer-Night's Dream, he happened to take at Grendon in Bucks, which is the road from London to Stratford; and there was living that constable about 1642, when I first came to Oxford. I think it was midsummer-night that he happened to lie there. Mr. Jos. Howe is of that parish, and knew him. Ben Jonson and he did gather humours of men daily, wherever they came."[14]

[14] As to certain other parts of what Aubrey so gossipingly narrates, we make no account of them whatever. Such is the following, which bears *fable* written on its face: "Mr. William Shakespeare was borne at Stratford upon Avon in the county of Warwick: his father was a butcher; and I have been told heretofore by some of the neighbours, that when he was a boy he exercised his father's trade, but when he kill'd a calfe, he would doe it in a high style, and make a speech. There was at that time another butcher's son in this towne, that was held not at all inferior to him for a naturall witt, his acquaintance and coetanean, but dyed young." It is remarkable that Aubrey makes Michael Drayton, also from Warwickshire, to have been likewise "a butcher's son," which is known not to have been the case. However, perhaps we ought to add another version of the story from a small treatise, written in April, 1693, by one Dowdall, and addressed to Edward Southwell. The writer is giving an account of a visit he made to

This natural inclination, fed, as in all likelihood it was, by the frequent theatrical performances which took place at Stratford all through the Poet's boyhood, would go far, if not suffice of itself, to account for his subsequent course of life. We have already seen that before 1577 four several companies, the Queen's, the Earl of Worcester's, the Earl of Leicester's, and the Earl of Warwick's, acted there under the patronage of the corporation. And the chamberlain's accounts show that between 1569 and 1587 no less than ten distinct companies exhibited under the same auspices, including, besides those just named, the Earl of Derby's, the Earl of Berkley's, the Lord Chandos', the Earl of Oxford's, the Earl of Essex', and the Earl of Stafford's. In 1587, five of these companies are found performing there; and within the period mentioned the Earl of Leicester's men are noted on three several occasions as receiving money from the corporation, namely, in 1573, 1577, and 1587. In May, 1574, the Earl of Leicester obtained a patent under the great seal, enabling his players, James Burbage, John Perkyn John Laneham, William Johnson, and Robert Wilson, to exercise their art in any part of the kingdom except London. In 1587, this company became "The Lord Chamberlain's Servants;" and we shall find that in 1589 Shakespeare was a member of it. James Burbage was the father of Richard Burbage, the greatest actor of that age; and we learn from the Earl of Southampton, in a letter to be given hereafter, that Richard Burbage and William Shakespeare were "both of one county, and indeed almost of one town." In 1558,

the Stratford church: "The clarke that shew'd me this church is above 80 years old; he says that this Shakespear was formerly in this towne bound apprentice to a butcher, but that he run from his master to London, and there was received into the playhouse as a serviture, and by this meanes had an oppertunity to be what he afterwards prov'd." Probably Aubrey's and Dowdall's stories grew both from the same source, the matter being varied from time to time in the telling. Malone discovered that there was a butcher named John Shakespeare living at Warwick in 1610. Hence perhaps, the stories in question.

Francis Burbage was high bailiff of Stratford: he was probably a relative, perhaps a brother, of James. Another member of the same company in 1589, was Thomas Greene, also from Stratford; and Malone supposes that he, being older in the business than Shakespeare, may have introduced him to the theatre.[15] Among the players, also, with whom our Poet was afterwards associated, are found the names of John Heminge, William Slye, and Nicholas Tooley, all Warwickshire men.

We have just seen that after 1577 the chamberlain's accounts have no entry touching the Earl of Leicester's players, till 1587. Nevertheless, it is altogether likely that they were there many times during that interval. For, armed as they were with a patent under the great seal, they could perform independently of the corporation; which other companies could not do, an act having been passed in 1572 for restraining itinerant actors; whereby they became liable to be proceeded against as vagabonds, for performing without a licence from the local authorities. It may, we think, be safely presumed, that before 1586 Shakespeare was well acquainted with some of the players with whom, only three years after, he is found a joint sharer in a London theatre. In their exhibitions, rude as these probably were, he could not but have been a greedy spectator and an apt scholar

[15] The Greenes appear to have been a numerous and respectable family at Stratford. One of them was a solicitor in London The parish register has an entry, March 6, 1589, of the burial of "Thomas Greene, *alias* Shakspere;" from which it has been plausibly conjectured that there was some relationship between the Shakespeares and Greenes. The Thomas Greene mentioned in the text was a very popular comic actor, and became so famous in the part of Bubble, one of the characters in The City Gallant, who is continually repeating the phrase, *Tu quoque*, that the play was afterwards named "Greene's Tu Quoque, or the City Gallant." The play was printed in 1614, with an epistle by Thomas Heywood prefixed, from which it appears that Greene was then dead. We shall hereafter find another Thomas Greene speaking of Shakespeare as "my cozen." He, also, was of Stratford.

Nor can there be any extravagance in supposing, that by 1586 he may have taken some part, as actor or writer, perhaps both, in their performances. Greene, a fellow-townsman, perhaps a relative of his, was already one of their number. All this, to be sure, might not be, probably was not, enough to draw him away from Stratford; but it will readily be granted, that when other reasons came, if others there were, for his leaving Stratford, these circumstances would hold out to him an easy and natural access and invitation to the stage. There is, then, we think, very good ground for believing that he became a player before quitting Stratford, and that he quitted Stratford as a player.

What other inducements he had for embracing the opportunity thus presented, comes next to be considered. As to the deer-stealing matter, Rowe's account is as follows: "He had, by a misfortune common enough to young fellows, fallen into ill company; and among them some, that made a frequent practice of deer-stealing, engaged him more than once in robbing a park that belonged to Sir Thomas Lucy, of Charlecote, near Stratford. For this he was prosecuted by that gentleman, as he thought, somewhat too severely; and, in order to revenge that ill-usage, he made a ballad upon him. And though this, probably the first essay of his poetry, be lost, yet it is said to have been so very bitter, that it redoubled the prosecution against him to that degree, that he was obliged to leave his business and family in Warwickshire for some time, and shelter himself in London." [16]

[16] The account given by Oldys is so like this as to argue that he either drew it from Rowe or else from the same source as Rowe's. It is as follows: "Our poet was the son of Mr. John Shakespeare, woolstapler. 'Tis a tradition, descended from old Betterton, that he was concerned with a parcel of deer-stealers in robbing Sir Tho. Lucy's park at Charlecot, which drove him to London among the players. The Queen had his plays often acted before her, and shewed him some gracious marks of favour; and King James gave him and others a patent for a company in 1603 See it in Rymers Fœdera. Thomas [Henry] Wriothesley, E. of Southampton, gave him £1000 to complete a purchase."

Divers attempts have been made, to impeach this account. Whether, indeed, all its circumstances were true, may well be doubted; but the main substance of it stands approved by too much strength of credible tradition to be overthrown. The earliest confirmation of it comes in this wise: The Rev. William Fulman died in 1688, leaving certain manuscripts to his friend the Rev. Richard Davies, rector of Sapperton, Gloucestershire. Davies made several additions to them; and on his death, in 1708, the whole were presented to the library of Corpus Christi College, Oxford. On the subject of Shakespeare, Fulman's notes are very few and unimportant; but what was added by Davies very clearly confirms the substance of the deer-stealing story.[17] In 1779, Capell gave another statement of the matter, which also bears credibility in its countenance. It is as follows: "A Mr. Jones, who lived at Turbich in Worcestershire, about eighteen miles from Stratford, and died in 1703 at the age of ninety, remembered to have heard from several old people at Stratford the story of Shakespeare's robbing Sir Thomas Lucy's park; and their account of it agreed with Rowe's, with this addition, that the ballad written against Sir Thomas by Shakespeare was stuck upon his park-gate; which exasperated the knight to apply to a lawyer at Warwick to

[17] "William Shakespeare was born at Stratford upon Avon in Warwickshire, about 1563–4. From an actor of playes he became a composer. He dyed Apr. 23, 1616, ætat. 53, probably at Stratford, for there he is buryed, and hath a monument." This is all that Fulman says on the subject. Davies adds the following "Much given to all unluckinesse in stealing venison and rabbits, particularly from Sir Lucy, who had him oft whipt, and sometimes imprisoned, and at last made him fly his native country to his great advancement; but his reveng was so great, that he is his Justice Clodpate, and calls him a great man; and that in allusion to his name bore three louses rampant for his arms." Mr. Collier has made it necessary to remark that *Clodpate* is here used, apparently, as a generic name for a blockhead. For an explanation of the "three louses rampant on his arms," see the first scene of The Merry Wives of Windsor, note 5.

proceed against him. Mr. Jones had put down in writing the first stanza of this ballad, which was all he remembered of it; and Mr. Thomas Wilkes, my grandfather, transmitted it to my father by memory, who also took it in writing." A few years later, Steevens printed the stanza from Oldys' manuscripts, which are also referred to by Capell as containing it. And, though the genuineness of the fragment seems questionable enough, the whole thing may be taken as proving that the tradition was generally believed at Stratford in the latter part of the seventeenth century.[18]

Mr. Halliwell has the following curious matter, which appears to throw some light on the question in hand: "The Lucys possessed great power at Stratford, and were, besides, not unfrequently engaged in disputes with the corporation of that town. Records of one such dispute respecting common of pasture in Henry VIII.'s reign are still preserved in the Chapter House; and amongst the miscellaneous papers at the Roll House, I met with an early paper bearing the attractive title of 'the names of them that made the riot upon Master Thomas Lucy, Esquire.' This list contains the names

[18] Collier mistakenly attributes Capell's account to Oldys, thus making one authority out of two. At a later period, one Jordan of Stratford palmed off upon his friends what he termed "a complete copy of the verses," professing to have found them in an old chest in a cottage at Shottery. The thing is a palpable forgery, yet several have printed it as genuine. We subjoin the stanza given by Steevens, though ourselves doubting very much, in the first place, whether there ever were any such ballad, and still more, in the second place, whether, if there were, this formed any part of it:

"A parliamente member, a justice of peace,
At home a poore scare-crow, at London an asse;
If lowsie is Lucy, as some volke miscalle it,
Then Lucy is lowsie, whatever befalle it:
He thinkes himselfe greate.
Yet an asse in his state
We allowe by his eares but with asses to mate.
If Lucy is lowsie, as some volke miscalle it,
Sing lowsie Lucy, whatever befalle it."

of thirty-five inhabitants of Stratford, mostly tradespeople, but none of the Shakespeares were amongst the number. We may safely accept the deer-stealing story, not in all its minute particulars, but in its outline, to be essentially true, until more decisive evidence can be produced."

Malone fell upon this story, and thought he had finished it, on the ground that Sir Thomas Lucy had no park and that he never seems to have sent the corporation of Stratford a buck, such compliments being usual from persons of rank and wealth in the vicinity. This argument is disposed of by Mr. Collier thus: "That the Sir Thomas Lucy who succeeded his father in 1600 made such gifts, though not perhaps to the corporation of Stratford, is very certain. When Lord Keeper Egerton entertained Queen Elizabeth at Harefield, in August, 1602, many of the nobility and gentry, in nearly all parts of the kingdom, sent him an abundance of presents, to be used or consumed in the entertainment; and on that occasion Sir Thomas Lucy contributed 'a buck,' for which a reward of 6*s.* 8*d.* was given to the bringer. This single circumstance shows that, if he had no park, he had deer; and it is most likely that he inherited them from his father."[19]

We will dismiss the subject with another passage from Halliwell. "Mr. Knight," says he, "has attacked the deer stealing anecdote with peculiar ingenuity, yet his refutation is not supported by evidence of weight. Traditions generally do not improve in certainty with age, and so many little

[19] Mr. Collier, in a note, quotes the following from the Editor of the Egerton Papers, 1840: "Many of these presents deserve notice, but especially one of the items, where it is stated that Sir Thomas Lucy, against whom Shakespeare is said to have written a ballad, sent a present of a 'buck.' Malone discredits the whole story of the deer-stealing, because Sir Thomas Lucy had no park at Charlecote: 'I conceive,' he says, 'it will very readily be granted that Sir Thomas Lucy could not lose that of which he was never possessed.' We find, however, from what follows, that he was possessed of deer, for he sent a present of a buck to Lord Ellesmere, in 1602."

improbable and inconsistent circumstances are added in course of time, that to disprove these latter is often no difficult task. This has been the case in the present instance; and Mr. Knight is triumphant when he reaches the circumstantial statement of Ireland, who makes Fulbroke Park the scene of the exploit, and goes so far as to give us a representation of the keeper's lodge in which Shakespeare was confined after his detection. According to Mr. Knight, Fulbroke Park did not come into the possession of the Lucy family till the seventeenth century. This is, of course, a final refutation of Ireland's account; but it must be recollected, no such testimony is produced against the fact that Sir Thomas Lucy persecuted the Poet for stealing his deer. This is in substance all that is here contended for; and Mr. Knight writes so evidently with a purpose, — for in no single instance, on no strength of evidence, will he allow a blemish in Shakespeare's moral character, even in venial lapses which really do not lessen our respect for his memory — that it may perhaps be necessary to impress upon the reader how biography loses nearly all its value, if we are not permitted to exhibit social character as it actually existed, and thus make it of a philosophical importance, by teaching us in what substances 'finely touch'd' spirits are suffered to dwell."

We fully agree with this candid writer in not wishing to make Shakespeare out any better than he was. Little as we know about him, it is but too evident that he had many frailties, and ran into divers faults, both as a poet and as a man. And when we find him confessing, as in Sonnet cx., — "Most true it is, that I have look'd on truth askance and strangely," — we may be sure that he was but too conscious of things that needed to be forgiven, and that he was as far as any one from wishing his faults to pass for virtues. Still it should be borne in mind that deer-stealing was then a kind of fashionable sport, and that, whatever might be its legal character, it was not morally regarded as involving any

criminality or disgrace. Proofs of this might easily be multiplied. Thus Dr. John Raynolds, who wrote bitterly against plays in 1599, reckons deer-stealing in the same class of offences with dancing about May-poles and robbing orchards. And Fosbroke, in his History of Gloucestershire, gives an anecdote, how several respectable persons of that county attorneys and others, "all men of mettle, and good wood-men, I mean old notorious deer-stealers, well-armed, came in the night-time to Michaelwood, with deer-nets and dogs, to steal deer."[20] So that the whole thing may be justly treated as nothing more than a youthful frolic, wherein there might indeed be much indiscretion, and a deal of vexation to the person robbed, but no stain on the party engaged in it.

It is commonly supposed that the part of Justice Shallow was framed more or less upon the model of Sir Thomas Lucy. The passage from Davies, quoted in note 17 of this Chapter, shows that such a notion was entertained as early as 1708. The Sir Thomas Lucy of 1586 died in 1600. Granting him to have been drawn upon somewhat for the features of the portrait in question, still, perhaps, we are hardly warranted in affirming that the part was intended as a particular satire on Sir Thomas. Or at least, if this be not allowed, we must in all fairness suppose The Merry Wives of Windsor to have been written before 1600; it being altogether unlikely that "my gentle Shakespeare," as he was proverbially called,

[20] Dr. Forman, in his Diary, already quoted, mentions a curious instance of two Oxford students in 1573. — "The one of them was Sir Thornbury, that after was bishope of Limerike, and he was of Magdalen College, the other was Sir Pinckney his cossine of St. Mary Halle;" and then adds, — "Thes many tymes wold make Simon to goo forth too Loes, the keper of Shottofer, for his houndes to goe on huntinge from morninge to nighte; and they never studied, nor gave themselves to their bookes, but to goe to scolles of defence, to the daunceing scolles, *to stealle dear and connyes*, and to hunt the hare, and to woinge of wenches; to goe to Doctor Lawrence of Cowly, for he had two fair daughters, Besse and Martha."

would have continued the satire after the object of it had undergone the consecrating touch of death. But the more likely supposition appears to be, that he regarded Sir Thomas merely as one of a class, and then borrowed from him so much as would serve the dramatic purpose of individualizing that class. Such a course were more consonant to the laws of art, as well as of charity, than to hold up a particular person as a theme of ridicule to the play-going public. Old Aubrey, as we have seen, tells us that "Ben Jonson and he did gather humours of men daily, wherever they came." Doubtless his quick and piercing observation caught up many lines of humour and character from the actual men and women that came under his eye: these were legitimate material of his art; and the working of them in, as they would serve this end, should not be called personal satire. Mr. Halliwell has shown that he sometimes adopted the names of people within his knowledge. Bardolph, Fluellen, Davy, Peto, Perkes, Partlett, Page, Ford, Herne, and Sly, were all of them names of people living at Stratford in his time.

The precise time of the Poet's leaving Stratford is not known. From the position he held in 1589, Mr. Collier thinks he must have joined the company before the end of 1586. And certainly his pace must have been rapid indeed, to have got on so far in a less space of time than this supposition would give him. We have seen that his children, Hamnet and Judith, were born in the early part of 1585. It was made evident in our preceding Chapter, that from 1579 till after 1586 his father was in pecuniary distress, and that this distress kept growing upon him. At the latter date, he had on his hands a family of five children. The prosecutions of Sir Thomas Lucy, added to the increasing embarrassments of his father, may very well have rendered him at this time desirous of quitting Stratford; and the meeting of inclination and opportunity, as we have traced them, in the acquaintance of the players, may as well have determined him

where to go and what to do. There can be no doubt, that the company which he joined were already in a course of thrift; the demand for their labours was constantly growing; and nothing is more likely than that he may have espied, in their connection, a hope of retrieving, as he soon did retrieve, his father's fortune.

Of course, there can be little question that Shakespeare held at first a subordinate rank in the company. Dowdall, writing in 1693, — the passage is quoted in note 14 of this Chapter, — tells us he "was received into the play-house as a *servitor*;" which probably means no more than that he started as an apprentice to some actor of standing in the company, — a thing not unusual at the time.[21] It will readily be believed, that he could not long be in such a place, without recommending himself to a higher one. As for the well-known story of his being reduced to the extremity of "picking up a little money by taking care of the gentlemen's horses, who came to the play," we cannot perceive the slightest likelihood of truth in it. The first that we hear of it is in The Lives of the Poets, written by a Scotchman named Shiels, and published under the name of Cibber, in 1753. The story is there alleged to have passed through Rowe in coming down to the writer's knowledge.[22] If so, it would

[21] Henslowe's manuscript register has a memorandum, how he "hired as a covenaunt servant Willyam Kendall for ii. years, after the statute of Winchester, with ii. single pene, and he to geve hym for his sayd servis everi week of his playing in London x. *s.*, and in the countrie v. *s.*; for the which he covenaunteth for the space of those ii. yeares to be redye at all tymes to play in the howse of the said Philip, and in no other, during the sayd terme."

[22] Shiels gives the following illustrious pedigree of the tale as it came to him: "I cannot forbear relating a story which Sir William Davenant told Mr. Betterton, who communicated it to Mr. Rowe; Rowe told it to Mr. Pope, and Mr. Pope told it to Dr. Newton, the late editor of Milton, and from a gentleman who heard it from him, 'tis here related. Concerning Shakespeare's first appearance in the play-house. When he came to London, he was without money and friends, and, being a stranger, he knew not to

appear that Rowe must have discredited it, else, surely, he would not have omitted so remarkable a passage. Be that as it may, the station which the Poet's family had long held in Stratford, the number and rank of his fellow-townsmen in the company, and the place himself held in 1589, all bear witness against it as an arrant fiction. Shiels served as an amanuensis to Dr. Johnson, who gave an improved version of the tale; which version we subjoin:

"In the time of Elizabeth, coaches being yet uncommon and hired coaches not at all in use, those who were too proud, too tender, or too idle to walk, went on horseback to any distant business or diversion. Many came on horseback to the play; and when Shakespeare fled to London from the terror of a criminal prosecution, his first expedient was to wait at the door of the play-house, and hold the horses of those that had no servants, that they might be ready again after the performance. In this office he became so conspicuous for his care and readiness, that in a short time every man, as he alighted, called for Will Shakespeare, and scarcely any other waiter was trusted with a horse while Will Shakespeare could be had. This was the first dawn of better fortune. Shakespeare, finding more horses put into his hand than he could hold, hired boys to wait under his inspection, who, when Will Shakespeare was summoned, were immediately to present themselves, — 'I am Shakespeare's boy, Sir.' In time, Shakespeare found higher employment; but as long as the practice of riding to the play-house continued, the waiters that held the horses retained the appellation of Shakespeare's boys."

whom to apply, nor by what means to support himself. At that time, coaches not being in use, and as gentlemen were accustomed to ride to the play-house, Shakespear, driven to the last necessity, went to the play-house door, and pick'd up a little money by taking care of the gentlemen's horses who came to the play."

CHAPTER III.

FROM THE EARLIEST NOTICE OF SHAKESPEARE IN LONDON TILL HIS PURCHASE OF NEW PLACE.

THE first London play-house dates from 1576, in which year James Burbage and his fellows opened the Blackfriars theatre, so named from a monastery that had formerly stood on or near the same ground. Hitherto the several bands of players had made use of churches, halls, temporary erections in the streets or the inn-yards, stages being set up, and the spectators standing below, or occupying galleries about the open space. In 1577, two other play-houses were in operation, called The Curtain and The Theatre. The next year, a puritanical preacher named Stockwood published a sermon, in which he alleged that there were "eight ordinary places" in and near London for dramatic performances, the united profits of which were not less than £2000 a year. About the same time, another preacher named White, equally set against the stage, described the play-houses then in operation as "sumptuous theatres." As to the number of actors performing in and about the metropolis, a man calling himself "a soldier" wrote to Walsingham in January, 1586, telling him that "every day in the week the players bills are set up in sundry places of the city," and that not less than two hundred persons, thus retained and employed, strutted in their silks about the streets.

The Blackfriars and some of the others were without the limits of the corporation, in what were called "the liberties." The Mayor and Aldermen of London were from the first decidedly hostile to all such establishments, and did their best to exclude them from the city and liberties; but the Court and many of the chief nobility favoured them.

Many complaints were alleged against them, many efforts made to restrain and obstruct them; for which, no doubt, they gave but too much occasion, by venting satire and buffoonery in "matters of state and religion;" and, from the special part the Puritans had taken against them, it was natural that they should in turn give the Puritans special provocation.

We have seen that the company of Burbage and his fellows, known as the Earl of Leicester's players, held at this time the privileges of a patent under the great seal. In 1587, they took the title of "the Lord Chamberlain's Servants." It appears that in 1589 their interests were somehow threatened, or they thought them threatened, on account of offences done by other companies; two others, those of the Lord Admiral and the Lord Strange, having been summoned before the Lord Mayor, and ordered to desist from all performances. Accordingly, in November of that year, they sent to the Privy Council a certificate of their good conduct, in which sixteen persons by name, styling themselves "her Majesty's poor players," and "sharers in the Blackfriars playhouse," allege that they "have never given cause of displeasure, in that they have brought into their plays matters of state and religion, unfit to be handled by them, or to be presented before lewd spectators; neither hath any complaint in that kind ever been preferred against them, or any of them." This remarkable document passed into the hands of Lord Ellesmere, then attorney-general, and was lately discovered among his papers, by Mr. Collier.[1]

[1] We subjoin the paper in full: "These are to certifie your right Honorable Lordships, that her Majesties poore Playeres, James Burbadge, Richard Burbadge, John Lanceham, Thomas Greene, Robert Wilson, John Taylor, Anth. Wadeson, Thomas Pope, George Peele, Augustine Phillipps, Nicholas Towley, William Shakespeare, William Kempe, William Johnson, Baptiste Goodale, and Robert Armyn, being all of them sharers in the Blacke Fryers playehouse, have never given cause of displeasure, in that they have brought into their playes maters of state and Religion, unfitt to be handled by them, or to be presented before

The Burbage establishment seems to have been conducted on rather liberal, not to say democratic, principles; all who were of any note connected with it being admitted as joint sharers in the profits. In this list of sixteen sharers, the name of William Shakespeare stands the twelfth; and among them are four others, the two Burbages, Greene, and Tooley, who were from the same county with him. It is not to be supposed that this list includes all who belonged in any way to the concern, but only such as held the rank of sharers: others, no doubt, who played inferior parts, were retained as hired men or apprentices, such as Shakespeare had probably been at his first entrance among them.

At the date of this certificate, the Poet was in his twenty-sixth year, and had probably been in the theatre not far from three years. Whether at this time he recommended himself to advancement more by his acting or his writing, is a question about which we can only speculate. In tragic parts, none of them could shine beside the younger Burbage; while Greene, and still more Kempe, another of the sharers, left small chance of distinction in comic parts. Aubrey tells us that Shakespeare "was a handsome, well-shap'd man;" which is no slight matter on the stage; and adds, — "He did act exceedingly well." Rowe "could never meet with any further account of him this way, than that the top of his performance was the Ghost in his own Hamlet." But this part, to be fairly dealt with, requires an actor of no ordinary powers; and, as Burbage is known to have played the Prince, we may presume that "the buried majesty of Denmark" would not be cast upon very inferior hands. Campbell the poet justly observes of the Ghost, that "though its move-

lewde spectators; neither hath anie complaynte in that kinde ever bene preferrde against them, or anie of them. Wherefore, they trust most humblie in your Lordships consideration of their former good behaviour, being at all tymes readie and willing to yeelde obedience to any command whatsoever your Lordships in your wisdome may thinke in such case meete, &c.

"Nov. 1589."

ments are few, they must be awfully graceful; and the spectral voice, though subdued and half-monotonous, must be solemn and full of feeling. It gives us an imposing idea of Shakespeare's stature and mien, to conceive him in this part."

That he was master of the theory of acting, and could tell, none better, how the thing ought to be done, is evident enough from Hamlet's instructions to the players. But it nowise follows, that he could perform his own instructions. Though it is travelling somewhat out of the calendar, we may as well finish this subject here. There is strong reason for believing that the Poet figured a good deal in images of royalty. Davies, in his Scourge of Folly, 1611, has the following:

"To our English Terence, Mr. Will. Shakespeare.

"Some say, good Will, which I in sport do sing,
Hadst thou not play'd some kingly parts in sport,
Thou hadst been a companion for a king,
And been a king among the meaner sort."

This is as good authority as need be asked, as to the line of characters in which the Poet was known. And there is a tradition, that Queen Elizabeth was in the theatre one evening when he was playing the part of a king; and in crossing the stage she moved politely to him without the honour being duly recognised. With a view to ascertain whether the omission were accidental, or whether he were resolved not to lose for an instant the character he sustained, she then passed the stage again near him, and dropped her glove, which he immediately took up and added to a speech just then finished these lines, "so aptly delivered, that they seemed to belong to it,"—

"And though now bent on this high embassy,
Yet stoop we to take up our cousin's glove."

He then retired from the stage, and presented the glove to her Majesty, who was greatly pleased with his conduct, and complimented him upon it.

We do not hold the story to be worth much; but it may be taken with other things as indicating that the Poet was somewhat celebrated in connection with the royalties of the stage, at a time when something dignified and handsome, not to say noble and majestic, was required in such parts by public sentiment. Oldys relates another story which, if it may be credited, infers him to have sustained the part of the "good old man," Adam, in As You Like It.[2] But his histrionic career, even had he been another Burbage, were but a trifle in comparison with what he did as a dramatist, and is here dwelt upon merely because it seemed necessary to say something about it.

Among his fellow-sharers in 1589 is found the name of George Peele, who was considerably his senior in years, and was already a practised and popular play-wright. Peele was

[2] Capell says, in 1779, that this "traditional story was current some years ago about Stratford." Oldys gives it as follows: "One of Shakespeare's younger brothers, who lived to a good old age, even some years, as I compute, after the restoration of King Charles II., would in his younger days come to London to visit his brother Will, as he called him, and be a spectator of him as an actor in one of his own plays. This custom, as his brother's fame enlarged, and his dramatick entertainments grew the greatest support of our principal if not of all our theatres, he continued, it seems, so long after his brother's death as even to the latter end of his own life. The curiosity at this time of the most noted actors to learn something from him of his brother, made them greedily inquisitive into every little circumstance, more especially in his dramatick character, which he could relate of him. But he, it seems, was so stricken in years, and possibly his memory so weakened by infirmities, that he could give them but little light into their enquiries; and all that could be recollected from him of his brother Will in that station, was the faint, general, and almost lost ideas he had of having once seen him act a part in one of his own comedies; wherein, being to personate a decrepit old man, he wore a long beard, and appeared so weak and drooping, and unable to walk, that he was forced to be supported and carried by another person to a table, at which he was seated among some company who were eating, and one of them sung a song." This story, if there be any truth in it, must refer to the Poet's brother Gilbert, his other two brothers, Richard and Edmund, having died long before.

an university man and a Master of Arts, and had doubtless won his position mainly as a writer. He seems to have withdrawn from the company in 1590, as, after that date, he is found no more among them, but is met with in other connections. It is nowise unlikely that by this time another hand may have lessened the value of his services, or that he may have taken some disgust at the unlearned rivalry which threatened his pre-eminence.

There can, we think, be no reasonable doubt, that before the end of 1590 Shakespeare was well started in his dramatic career, and that the effect of his cunning labours was beginning to be felt by his senior fellows in that line: that such was the case soon afterwards, is certain, as we shall presently see. It has been but too common to regard him and speak of him as a miracle of spontaneous genius, who did his best things without knowing how or why; that his strength did not grow with the ripening of judgment, and with "years that bring the philosophic mind;" and that, consequently, he was nowise indebted to time and experience for the wonderful reach and power which his writings display. This is an "old fond paradox," which seems to have originated with those who could not conceive how, save by a miracle of genius, any man could become learned without scholastic advantages; forgetting, apparently, that several things, if not more, may be learned in the school of nature, provided one have an eye to read her "open secrets" without "the spectacles of books."

This notion has vitiated a great deal of Shakespearian criticism. Rowe evidently had something of it. "Perhaps," says he, "we are not to look for his beginnings, like those of other authors, among his least perfect writings: art had so little, and nature so large a share in what he did, that, for aught I know, the performances of his youth, as they were the most vigorous, and had the most fire and strength of imagination in them, were the best." We think most decidedly otherwise; and have grounds for doing so which

Rowe had not, in what has since been done towards ascertaining the chronology of the Poet's plays. At all events, several of them, by external and internal marks, were evidently the work of his "prentice hand;" and his course can, we think, be traced with tolerable clearness and certainty, as he grew from the apprentice into the master. The plays which we reckon to this his first period are Titus Andronicus, the first draught of Pericles, The Comedy of Errors, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, and Love's Labour's Lost in its original form. Our reasons for so doing are given at length in our several Introductions to those plays, and therefore need not be dwelt upon here.

Thus much, however, may be stated here: In these plays, as might be expected from one who was modest and wished to learn, we have much of imitation as distinguished from character, though of imitation surpassing its models. And it seems to us that no fair view can be had of his mind, no justice done to his art, but by carefully discriminating in his work what grew from imitation, and what from character. For he evidently wrote very much like others of his time, before he learned to write like himself; that is, it was some time before he found, by practice and experience, his own strength; and, meanwhile, he naturally relied more or less on the strength of custom and example. Nor was it till he had surpassed others in *their* way, that he hit upon that more excellent way in which none could walk but he. And this was more the case in tragedy than comedy, forasmuch as tragedy is a more artificial thing than comedy, and the elements of it lie more out of the walks of common life and observation. For a further consideration of this subject, if he care to take it, the reader may be referred to our Introductions to The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Titus Andronicus, and the Venus and Adonis.

The discovery of the players' certificate to the Privy Council in 1589 goes far to remove any improbability as to Shakespeare's being the "pleasant Willy" of Spenser's Tears of

the Muses; this having been formerly doubted on the ground that the Poet could not have earned such a notice so early as 1591, in which year The Tears of the Muses was first printed. In that poem, Spenser introduces Thalia, the Comic Muse, lamenting the condition of the stage:

"Where be the sweet delights of learning's treasure,
That wont with comic sock to beautify
The painted theatres, and fill with pleasure
The listeners' eyes, and ears with melody;
In which I late was wont to reign as Queen,
And mask in mirth with Graces well beseen?"

Then, after bemoaning the reign of "ugly Barbarism and brutish Ignorance, ycrept of late out of dread darkness," she continues thus:

"All places they with folly have possess'd,
And with vain toys the vulgar entertain;
But me have banished, with all the rest
That whilom wont to wait upon my train,
Fine Counterfeisance and unhurtful Sport,
Delight and Laughter, deck'd in seemly sort.

"And he, *the man whom Nature's self had made,*
To mock herself, and Truth to imitate,
With kindly counter under mimic shade,
Our pleasant Willy, ah! is dead of late;
With whom all joy and jolly merriment
Is also deaded, and in dolour dreut

"Instead thereof, scoffing scurrility,
And scornful Folly, with Contempt, is crept,
Rolling in rhymes of shameless ribaudry,
Without regard or due decorum kept;
Each idle wit at will presumes to make,
And doth the Learned's task upon him take.

"*But that same gentle spirit, from whose pen*
Large streams of honey and sweet nectar flow,
Scorning the boldness of such base-born men,
Which dare their follies forth so rashly throw,
Doth rather choose to sit in idle cell,
Than so himself to mockery to sell."

The probability is, that this poem was written in 1590, or, at the earliest, in 1589. At that period, the Martin Mar-

prelate controversy was raging fiercely, and the town was all agog with it. Walton, in his Life of Hooker, thus speaks of it "There was not only one Martin Marprelate, but other venomous books daily printed and dispersed; books that were so absurd and scurrilous, that the graver divines disdained them an answer. And yet these were grown into high esteem with the common people, till Tom Nash appeared against them all; who was a man of a sharp wit, and the master of a scoffing, satirical, merry pen." In 1589, the dispute was brought upon several of the London stages, with all the fierce ribaldries and buffooneries that such "scoffing, satirical, merry pens" could dress it in, to the great delight of the rude rabble, and to the disgust of men of taste and sobriety. We have already seen that two companies were that year interdicted from playing; and it was the theatrical use or abuse of this dispute, that drew upon them that measure. The acting choir-boys of St. Paul's also fell under a similar order that year, and for the same cause. Finally, this prostitution of the stage to the ends of polemical rancour and strife is what the Blackfriars company allude to, when, in their remonstrance, — for such it really is, — they allege that they "have never brought into their plays *matters of state and religion.*"

With Tom Nash was associated, in this controversy, John Lyly the Euphuist. One or both of them wrote the tract called Pap with a Hatchet, a very remarkable specimen of what was produced on the occasion. Lyly, writing, apparently, soon after the above-mentioned interdict, and referring to Martin Marprelate, says, — "Would those *comedies* might be allowed to be play'd, that are penned, and then I am sure he would be *deciphered*, and so perhaps *discouraged.*" And Gabriel Harvey, in a pamphlet dated November 5, 1589, has the following: "I am threatened with a bauble, and Martin menaced with a *comedy;* a fit motion for a jester and a player to try what may be done by employment of his faculty. Baubles and comedies are par.ous fellows to *decipher* and *dis-*

courage men (that is the point) with their witty flouts and learned jerks, enough to lash any man out of countenance. Nay, if you shake the painted scabbard at me, I have done; and all you that tender the preservation of your good names were best please Pap-Hatchet, and fee Euphues betimes, for fear lest he be moved, or some one of his apes hired, to make a play of you, and then is your credit quite undone for ever and ever. Such is the public reputation of their plays. He must needs be discouraged, whom they decipher. Better anger an hundred other, than two such that have the stage at commandment, and can furnish out Vices and Devils at their pleasure."

Spenser was an intimate friend of Harvey; and there cannot be a doubt, that these invasions of the stage by coarse vulgar lampoon and slang are alluded to in the "scoffing Scurrility and scornful Folly," and the "ugly Barbarism and brutish Ignorance," of which he makes Thalia complain; and when she speaks of these as having "crept *of late* out of dread darkness," there needs no stronger argument for referring the poem to the date in question. It can scarce be needful to remark, that the meaning of "*is dead* of late," in the stanzas quoted, is explained by what comes afterwards, — "Doth rather choose to sit in idle cell." But men, a few excepted, will always run away from poetry to hear personal or party slang. This abuse of the stage was popular; the public were infatuated with it; and the legitimate endeavours of art could for a while stand no chance in competition with it. It is not unlikely that the Blackfriars company, in spite of their remonstrance, suffered some interruption of their course, on account of the sins of others. At all events, nothing was more natural than that Shakespeare, instead of either running with the stream of popular infatuation or trying to stem it, should choose rather to retire, and let the madness take its course, waiting for a more auspicious day.

Malone was very tenacious, that the lines we have quoted from Spenser referred to Lyly. Besides the gross improb-

ability of such a reference in itself, Lyly, as we have seen, was concerned in that very prostitution of the stage which Spenser deplores. On the other hand, Mr. Halliwell, following Mr. Todd, inclines to think that the poem was written in 1580, and that the lines in question were meant for Sir Philip Sidney, who was sometimes called *Willy*. But, at that time, so far as is known, there had been no occasion given for such complaints. And before Thalia had any good cause thus to lament, Sir Philip was really dead; whereas the lines clearly suppose that "our pleasant Willy" was not really dead. But, indeed, Shakespeare was the only dramatist of that time, to whom such language as "the man whom Nature's self had made, to mock herself, and Truth to imitate" could with any show of fitness be applied. On the other hand, there was no man of that age more likely than Spenser to describe the Poet in terms than which none fitter have ever been used about him. And he appears to have had the "same *gentle* spirit" in his eye, when he wrote the lines in "Colin Clout's Come Home again," 1594, the last referring, of course, to Shakespeare's name:

> "And there, though last not least, is Ætion;
> A *gentler* shepherd may nowhere be found,
> Whose Muse, full of high thought's invention,
> Doth, like himself, heroically sound."

But, whatever doubts may attach to Spenser's meaning, there can be none as to that which we shall next produce. One of the most popular and most profligate dramatists of the time, was Robert Greene. On the 3d of September, 1592, having been reduced to beggary, and forsaken by his companions, he died miserably at the house of a poor shoemaker near Dowgate. Not long after, his "Groatsworth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance" was given to the public by Henry Chettle. Near the close of this tract Greene makes an address "to those Gentlemen his quondam acquaintance, that spend their wits in making plays," exhorting them to desist from such pursuits. The first of

these 'gentlemen" was Marlowe, distinguished alike for poetry, profligacy, and profanity; the other two were Lodge and Peele. We subjoin so much of the address as is needful for a full understanding of the point in hand:

"If woeful experience may move you, gentlemen, to beware, or unheard-of wretchedness intreat you to take heed, I doubt not but you will look back with sorrow on your time past, and endeavour with repentance to spend that which is to come. Wonder not, (for with thee will I first begin,) thou famous gracer of tragedians, that Greene, who hath said with thee like the fool in his heart, *There is no God*, should now give glory unto His greatness; for penetrating is His power, His hand lies heavy upon me, He hath spoken unto me with a voice of thunder, and I have felt He is a God that can punish enemies. Why should thy excellent wit, His gift, be so blinded that thou shouldest give no glory to the Giver? Is it pestilent Machiavellian policy that thou hast studied? O, peevish folly! What are his rules but mere confused mockeries, able to extirpate in small time the generation of mankind? . . . Look unto me, by him persuaded to that liberty, and thou shalt find it an infernal bondage. I know, the least of my demerits merit this miserable death; but wilful striving against known truth exceedeth all the terrors of my soul. Defer not, with me, till this last point of extremity; for little knowest thou how in the end thou shalt be visited.[3]

[3] That Greene's exhortation had no effect on Marlowe, is but too certain. Greene had not been a year in the grave, when Marlowe perished by a violent death in the very prime of manhood. This catastrophe occurred at Deptford, where in the burial-register of the parish-church of St. Nicholas may still be read the entry, "Christopher Marlowe, slaine by Francis Archer, the 1 of June, 1593." — In Beard's *Theatre of God's Judgments*, 1597, we have the following account: "Not inferior to any of the former in atheisme and impietie, and equal to al in maner of punishment, was one of our own nation, of fresh and late memorie, called Marlow, by profession a scholler, brought up from his youth in the Universitie of Cambridge, but by practise a play-maker and a poet of

"With thee I join young Juvenal, that biting satirist, that lately with me together writ a comedy. Sweet boy, might I advise thee, be advised, and get not many enemies by bitter words: inveigh against vain men, for thou canst do it, no man better, no man so well; thou hast a liberty to reprove all and name none; for, one being spoken to, all are offended, — none being blamed, no man is injured.[4] . . .

"And thou, no less deserving than the other two, in some things rarer, in nothing inferior, driven, as myself, to extreme shifts, a little have I to say to thee; and, were it not an idolatrous oath, I would swear by sweet St. George, thou art unworthy of better hap, sith thou dependest on so mean a stay. Base-minded men, all three of you, if by my misery ye be not warned: for unto none of you, like me, sought those burrs to cleave; those puppets, I mean, that speak from our mouths, those antics garnish'd in our colours. Is it not strange that I, to whom they all have been beholding, is it not like that you, to whom they all have been beholding, shall, were ye in that case that I am now, be both of them at once forsaken? Yes, trust them not; for there is an upstart crow beautified with our feathers, that, with his *tiger's heart wrapp'd in a player's hide*, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank-verse as the best of you; and, being an absolute Johannes Fac-totum, is in his own

scurrilitie, who by giving too large a swing to his owne wit, and suffering his lust to have the full reins, fell (not without just desert) to that outrage and extremitie, that hee denied God and his sonne Christ, and not onely in word blasphemed the Trinitie, but also (as it is credibly reported) wrote books against it, affirming our Saviour to be but a deceiver, and Moses to be but a conjurer and seducer of the people, and the holy Bible to bee but vaine and idle stories, and all religion but a device of policie. But see what a hooke the Lord put in the nostrils of this barking dogge."— DYCE.

[4] Lodge's talent as a satirist may be seen in his *Fig for Momus*, 1595. The "comedy" which he composed in conjunction with Greene, is *A Looking Glasse for London and England*.— DYCE.

conceit the only Shake-scene in a country. O, that I might intreat your rare wits to be employed in more profitable courses, and let these apes imitate your past excellence, and never more acquaint them with your admired inventions! I know the best husband of you all will never prove an usurer, and the kindest of them all will never prove a kind nurse: yet, whilst you may, seek better masters; for it is pity such rare wits should be subject to the pleasure of such rude grooms.

"In this I might insert two more that both have writ against these buckram gentlemen; but let their own work serve to witness against their own wickedness, if they persevere to maintain any more such peasants. For other newcomers, I leave them to the mercy of these painted monsters, who, I doubt not, will drive the best-minded to despise them: for the rest, it skills not, though they make a jest at them."

Here we have pretty conclusive evidence as to the position Shakespeare held in 1592. Though sneered at as a player, it is plain that he was already throwing the other playmakers of the time into the shade, and making their labours cheap. Blank-verse was Marlowe's special forte; he was the first to introduce it on the public stage; and his dramas show great skill in the use of it: but here was an "upstart" from the country, a "peasant," that was able to rival him in his own line. Moreover, he was a Do-all, a "Johannes Fac-totum," that could turn his hand to any thing; and his readiness to undertake what none others could do so well, naturally drew upon him the charge of conceit from those who envied his rising, and whose lustre was growing dim in his light. As for the insinuation of being "beautified with our feathers," the probable grounds of it are discussed sufficiently in our Introductions to The Taming of the Shrew and the First and Second Parts of King Henry VI., to which the reader is referred. We have little doubt that these three plays, as also the Third Part of King Henry VI., and the

original sketch of Romeo and Juliet, were written before the death of Greene. Our reasons for this are also stated in the Introductions to those plays.

It appears that both Shakespeare and Marlowe were offended, as they had cause to be, at the liberties Greene had taken with them; for, not long after, Chettle published a tract entitled Kind-Heart's Dream, in which he made a handsome apology to Shakespeare, as follows:

"About three months since died Mr. Robert Greene, leaving many papers in sundry booksellers' hands: among others, his Groatsworth of Wit, in which a letter, written to divers play-makers, is offensively by one or two of them taken; and, because on the dead they cannot be avenged, they wilfully forge in their conceits a living author; and, after tossing it to and fro, no remedy but it must light on me. How I have, all the time of my conversing in printing, hindered the bitter inveighing against scholars, it hath been very well known; and how in that I dealt, I can sufficiently prove. With neither of them that take offence was I acquainted; and with one of them I care not if I never be: the other, whom at that time I did not so much spare, as since I wish I had, — for that, as I have moderated the heat of living writers, and might have used my own discretion, (especially in such a case,) the author being dead, — that I did not, I am as sorry as if the original fault had been my fault: *because myself have seen his demeanour no less civil, than he excellent in the quality he professes; besides, divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing, that approves his art.* For the first, whose learning I reverence, and, at the perusing of Greene's book, struck out what then in conscience I thought he in some displeasure writ, or, had it been true, yet to publish it was intolerable, him I would wish to use me no worse than I deserve. I had only in the copy this share: It was ill written, as sometime Greene's hand was none of the best: licenced it must be, ere it could

be printed; which could never be, if it might not be read. To be brief, I writ it over, and, as near as I could, followed the copy; only in that letter I put something out, but in the whole book not a word in; for I protest it was all Greene's, not mine, nor Master Nash's, as some have unjustly affirmed."[5]

It is evident enough from this, that Shakespeare was already beginning to attract liberal notice from that circle of brave and accomplished gentlemen which adorned the state of Elizabeth. Among the "divers of worship" referred to by Chettle, first and foremost, doubtless, stood the high-souled, the generous Southampton, then in his twentieth year. Henry Wriothesley the third Earl of Southampton was but eight years old when his father died: the Southampton estates were large; during the young Earl's minority, his interests were in good hands, and the revenues accumulated; so that on coming of age he had means answerable to his dispositions. Moreover, he was a young man of good parts, of studious habits, of cultivated tastes, and,

[5] That it should have been attributed to Nash seems strange enough: but we have his own testimony, in addition to Chettle's, that such was the case. "Other newes," he says, "I am adver tised of, that a scald, trivial, lying pamphlet, cald *Greens Groats-worth of Wit*, is given out to be of my doing. God never have care of my soule, but utterly renounce me, if the least word or sillible in it proceeded from my pen, or if I were any way privie to the writing or printing of it." — "Possibly," observes Mr. Collier, "one of the 'lying' portions of it, in the opinion of Nash, was that in which the attack was made on Shakespeare," — a remark which somewhat surprises me. Nothing can be plainer than that Greene wrote the passage in question with a perfect knowledge that those whom he addressed, viz., Marlowe, Lodge, and Peele, were no less jealous of the "Shake-scene" than himself; and that they would relish the sneering allusion to one who had given evidence of possessing a dramatic power which in its full development might reduce the whole band of earlier play-wrights to comparative insignificance. There is, therefore, no likelihood that Nash, the companion of Greene, Marlowe, Lodge, and Peele, — and he too a writer for the stage, — would have beheld the bright dawn of Shakespeare's genius with feelings more liberal than theirs. — DYCE.

withal, of a highly chivalrous and romantic spirit; to all which he added the still nobler title to honour, that he was the early and munificent patron of Shakespeare. In 1593, the Poet published his Venus and Adonis, with a modest and manly dedication to this nobleman, very different from the usual high-flown style of literary adulation then in vogue; telling him, — "If your Honour seem but pleased, I account myself highly praised, and vow to take advantage of all idle hours, till I have honoured you with some graver labour." In the dedication, he calls the poem "the first heir of my invention:" whether he dated its birth from the writing or the publishing, does not appear: probably it had been written some time; possibly, before he left Stratford. This was followed, the next year, by his Lucrece, dedicated to the same nobleman in a strain of more open and assured friendship: "The warrant I have of your honourable disposition, not the worth of my untutored lines, makes it assured of acceptance. What I have done is yours, what I have to do is yours." Of these poems enough is said in our Introductions to them; so that their merits need not be canvassed here.

It was probably about this time, perhaps in the interval of these two publications, that Shakespeare had that experience of the Earl's bounty, which is recorded by Rowe: "There is one instance so singular in the munificence of this patron of Shakespeare's, that if I had not been assured that the story was handed down by Sir William Davenant, who was probably well acquainted with his affairs, I should not have ventured to have inserted, that my Lord Southampton at one time gave him a thousand pounds, to enable him to go through with a purchase which he heard he had a mind to." Rowe might well scruple the story of so large a gift; but the fact of his scruples being overruled shows that he had strong grounds for the statement. Possibly enough the amount may have been exaggerated: but all that we know of the Earl assures us that he could not but wish to

make a handsome return for the Venus and Adonis, and that whatsoever of the kind he did was bound to be "something rich and rare;" and it was but of a piece with his nobleness of character, that he should feel more the honour he was receiving than that he was conferring by such an act of generosity. Might not this be what the Poet meant by "the *warrant* I have of your honourable disposition?" Mr. Collier credits the whole amount. There needs no doubt on the score either of the Earl's disposition or his ability: the only question has reference to the Poet's occasions. These Mr. Collier thinks he has found in what will now be related.

On the 22d of December, 1593, Richard Burbage, who, his father having died or retired, was then the leader of the Blackfriars company, signed a bond to a builder named Peter Street for the building of the Globe theatre. The work was in progress, most likely, through the following year. The Blackfriars was not large enough for the company's purpose, but was entirely covered in, and furnished suitably for winter use. The Globe, made larger, and designed for use in summer, was a round wooden building, open to the sky, with the stage protected by an overhanging roof. Considering, then, the warm interest Southampton is known to have taken in all matters touching the stage, together with the strong personal motives which he had in the case of Shakespeare, it is by no means impossible that he may have bestowed even as large a sum as £1000, to enable him to furnish his share of money towards building the new theatre.

The Globe was probably opened in the spring of 1595 though we have no notice of the fact. No sooner was this enterprise carried through, than the company set on foot a design of repairing and enlarging their old establishment. Some of the people residing thereabouts not only opposed them in this design, but undertook to oust them altogether from that part of the town. To offset their remonstrance in this behalf, the company, early in 1596, sent in the following:

"To the Right Honourable the Lords of her Majesty's most honourable Privy Council.

"The humble petition of Thomas Pope, Richard Burbage John Heminge, Augustine Phillips, William Shakespeare, William Kempe, William Slye, Nicholas Tooley, and others, servants to the Right Honourable the Lord Chamberlain to her Majesty.

"Sheweth most humbly, that your petitioners are owners and players of the private house, or theatre, in the precinct and liberty of the Blackfriars, which hath been for many years used and occupied for the playing of tragedies, comedies, histories, interludes, and plays. That the same, by reason of its having been so long built, hath fallen into great decay; and that, besides the reparation thereof, it has been found necessary to make the same more convenient for the entertainment of auditories coming thereunto. That to this end your petitioners have all and each of them put down sums of money, according to their shares in the said theatre, and which they have justly and honestly gained by the exercise of their quality of stage-players; but that certain persons, (some of them of honour,) inhabitants of the said precinct and liberty of Blackfriars, have, as your petitioners are informed, besought your honourable lordships not to permit the said private house any longer to remain open, but hereafter to be shut up and closed, to the manifest and great injury of your petitioners, who have no other means whereby to maintain their wives and families, but by the exercise of their quality, as they have heretofore done. Furthermore, that in the summer season your petitioners are able to play at their new-built house on the Bankside call'd the Globe, but that in the winter they are compelled to come to the Blackfriars; and, if your honourable lordships give consent unto that which is pray'd against your petitioners, they will not only, while the winter endures, lose the means whereby they now support themselves and their families, but be un-

able to practise themselves in any plays or interludes, when call'd upon to perform for the recreation and solace of her Majesty and her honourable Court, as they have been heretofore accustomed.

"The humble prayer of your petitioners therefore is, that your honourable lordships will grant permission to finish the reparations and alterations they have begun; and, as your petitioners have hitherto been well order'd in their behaviour, and just in their dealings, that your honourable lordships will not inhibit them from acting at their abovenam'd private house in the precinct and liberty of Blackfriars; and your petitioners, as in duty most bounden, will ever pray for the increasing honour and happiness of your honourable lordships."

The issue of the thing is ascertained by a note written from the Office of the Revels on the 3d of May, 1596, to Henslowe, and found among his papers preserved at Dulwich College. It appears by this note, that the Master of the Revels received from the Privy Council an order "that the Lord Chamberlain's servants should not be disturbed at the Blackfriars;" and that "leave should be given unto them to make good the decay of the said house, but not to make the same larger than in former time hath been."

In 1589, we found Shakespeare the twelfth in a list of sixteen *sharers* of the Blackfriars: now he is found the fifth among eight persons, who style themselves "*owners* and players" of the same theatre, and allege that they "have put down sums of money, according to their *shares* in the said theatre." *Owner* and *sharer* were different, the one having reference to the property, the other only to the profits, of the establishment. The *practical* talent and rectitude of the Poet are well shown by his having reached such a *business* position in a period of not more than ten years.

We learn, also, from this petition that the company at that date had been "accustomed to perform for the recreation and solace of her Majesty and her honourable Court."

It would be curious to know at what time and by what play Shakespeare made his first conquest of Queen Elizabeth. It is tolerably clear that before the spring of 1596 he had written Richard III., King John, Richard II., and A Midsummer-Night's Dream. There is also reason for thinking that the original Hamlet and The Merchant of Venice were then in being; for it appears that in the summer of 1594 the companies of the Lord Chamberlain and the Lord Admiral had joint possession of a theatre in Newington Butts; and among the plays acted there, are found notices of a "Hamlet" and a "Venetian Comedy." These notices are from Henslowe's Diary, who was often ludicrously inexact in his entries of names. So that Malone might very well conjecture, as he did, that the Venetian Comedy was our Poet's Merchant of Venice; and it seems nowise unlikely that his first form of Hamlet may have been written before that date We have little doubt, also, that All's Well that Ends Well as originally written, was in being by the time in question. So that probably the first four of these plays at least, and perhaps all the seven, had then been performed for "the recreation and solace of her Majesty." At all events, there can be no question that both her taste and her vanity were at an early date touched and conciliated by the Poet. Already, no doubt, he was well started in those achievements of royal favour, to which Ben Jonson alludes in his great verses prefixed to the folio of 1623. And here we may aptly quote another allusion of similar import. In 1603, soon after the death of Elizabeth, Henry Chettle, whom we have already met with, put forth a poem entitled England's Mourning Garment, in which, after reproving divers poets for not writing in honour of the Queen, he thus refers to Shakespeare:

> "Nor doth the silver-tongued Melicert
> Drop from his honey'd Muse one sable tear
> *To mourn her death that graced his desert,*
> *And to his lays open'd her royal ear.*
> Shepherd, remember our Elizabeth.
> And sing her Rape, done by that Tarquin Death."

Hitherto we have met with no information as to whereabouts in London Shakespeare had his residence. Edward Alleyn, the player, and founder of Dulwich College, kept a Bear-garden in Southwark. Henslowe was manager of one of the London theatres, and Alleyn was son-in-law to his wife. The Bear-garden became a source of annoyance to the neighbourhood. Among the papers at Dulwich College, Mr. Collier found a memorandum of certain "inhabitants of Southwark," who in July, 1596, complained of this annoyance. "Mr. Shakespeare" was one of them. Which establishes that he was then occupying a house in that quarter; and the probability is, that he had lately taken it for the purpose of being near the Globe theatre. There is reason to think he continued to reside there for some years; for Mr. Collier quotes from a letter written by Mrs. Alleyn, October 20th, 1603, to her husband, then in the country; in which she speaks of having seen "Mr. Shakespeare, of the Globe," in Southwark. We have indeed no evidence that the Poet ever had his family with him in London, neither have we any that he did not. We are not aware of any thing which should make it unlikely that they may have been sometimes with him in the city; and the fact of his occupying a house there may well be thought to argue that such was the case.

Before quitting this period, we must observe that on the 11th of August, 1596, Shakespeare buried his only son, Hamnet, then in his twelfth year. This is the first severe home-stroke that we hear of as lighting upon him. His Sonnets, we think, infer him to have been a man of warm and true domestic affections; and from the strong desire he evidently had of handing down his name with honour to posterity, fathers can well conceive how he must have felt the blow.

Aubrey tells us Shakespeare "was wont to go to his native country once a year." We now have better authority than Aubrey for believing that the Poet's heart was in "his

native country" all the while. No sooner is he well established at London, and in receipt of funds to spare from the necessary demands of business, than we find him making liberal investments amidst the scenes of his youth. Mr. Collier *inferred* with much strength, that his first purchase at Stratford took place in 1597. For a full settlement of the point we are indebted to Mr. Halliwell, who discovered in the Chapter House, Westminster, the fine levied on that occasion. This discovery ascertains that in the spring of 1597 Shakespeare bought of William Underhill, for the sum of £60, the establishment called New Place, described as consisting of "one messuage, two barns, and two gardens, with their appurtenances." This was one of the best dwelling-houses in Stratford, and was situate in Chapel-ward, one of the best parts of the town. Early in the sixteenth century it was owned by the Cloptons, and called "the great house." It was in one of the gardens belonging to this house that the Poet was believed to have planted a mulberry tree; and the tradition to that effect has some support in that King James in 1609 made great efforts to introduce the mulberry into England, £935 being paid that year out of the public purse for the planting of trees "near the palace of Westminster."

We have seen that in January, 1597, John Shakespeare was still living in one of his Henley-street houses. There are strong reasons for believing that, after the purchase of New Place, the Poet's father and mother made their residence there, along with his wife and children. Those reasons are as follows: About that time, England was visited with a great dearth and scarceness. Stowe informs us that in 1596, wheat was sold for six, seven, and eight shillings the bushel. The dearth increased through 1597, and in August of that year wheat rose to thirteen shillings the bushel, then fell to ten, then rose again to "the late greatest price." What effects this produced at Stratford, as also what repute the Poet was then held in among his old neighbours, appears

from a letter dated January 24th, 1598, and written by Abraham Sturley, an alderman of Stratford. The letter was to Sturley's brother-in-law, Richard Quiney, who was then in London; and in it we have the following:

"I pray God send you comfortably home. This is one special remembrance, from your father's motion. It seemeth by him, that our countryman, Mr. Shakespeare, is willing to disburse some money upon some odd yard land or other at Shottery, or near about us. He thinketh it a very fit pattern to move him to deal in the matter of our tithes. By the instructions you can give him thereof, and by the friends he can make therefor, we think it a fair mark for him to shoot at, and not unpossible to hit. It obtained would advance him indeed, and do us much good.

"You shall understand, brother, that our neighbours are grown, with the wants they feel through the dearness of corn, (which here is, beyond all other countries that I can hear of, dear and over dear,) malcontent. They have assembled together in great number, and travelled to Sir Thomas Lucy on Friday last, to complain of our maltsters; on Sunday, to Sir Fulk Greville and Sir John Conway. There is a meeting here expected to-morrow. The Lord knoweth to what end it will sort! Thomas West, returning from the two knights of the woodland, came home so full, that he said to Mr. Bailiff that night, he hoped within a week to lead off them in a halter, meaning the maltsters; and I hope, saith John Grannams, if God send my Lord of Essex down shortly, to see them hanged on gibbets at their own doors."

Further light is thrown on this subject of the dearth by a curious manuscript list, headed "Stratford Borough, Warwick. The note of corn and malt, taken the 4th of February, 1598." The purpose of it evidently was, to ascertain how much corn and malt there really was in the town, under a suspicion that the owners were withholding it from use in order to raise its price. The names of the townsmen are all given, with the several wards where they resided, and also

of the strangers, so far as known. In the statement of the "townsmen's corn" in Chapel-street Ward, we have, among others, "Wm. Shakespeare, 10 quarters;" and only two persons in the ward are put down as having a larger quantity. The name of John Shakespeare does not occur in the list; and from this fact Mr. Collier reasonably infers that he was then living with his son William; and that the Poet had laid in this large store, in order to be sure of a competent provision for a larger family than his wife and two daughters.

New Place remained in the hands of Shakespeare and his heirs till the Restoration, when it was repurchased by the Clopton family. In the spring of 1742, Garrick, Macklin, and Delane were entertained there by Sir Hugh Clopton, under the Poet's mulberry-tree. About 1752, the place was sold to the Rev. Francis Gastrell, who, falling out with the Stratford authorities in some matter of rates, demolished the house, and cut down the tree, for which his memory has been visited with exemplary retribution.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM THE EARLIEST PRINTED CRITICISM ON SHAKESPEARE TILL HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE STAGE.

THE earliest printed copies of Shakespeare's plays, known in modern times, were "The First Part of the Contention betwixt the two famous Houses of York and Lancaster," and "The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York," severally dated 1594 and 1595. They were doubtless written several years before, and at the time of the printing had *probably* been revised into the form they now bear as the Second and Third Parts of King Henry VI. The matter is sufficiently

discussed in our Introductions. It is highly probable that Titus Andronicus was printed in 1594, for a play with that title was entered at the Stationers' in February of that year, and Langbaine, writing in 1691, speaks of an edition of that date. If so, the edition has been lost, no copies of an earlier date than 1600 being now known. In 1597, three of his plays, Romeo and Juliet, Richard II., and Richard III., were published severally in quarto pamphlets. The Romeo and Juliet was evidently a fraudulent edition, and a garbled text. Three years after, the play was reissued, "newly corrected, augmented, and amended." In 1598, two more, The First Part of King Henry IV. and Love's Labour's Lost, came from the press, in the same form as the preceding. The author's name was not given in any of these issues, except the last-named, which was said to be "newly corrected and augmented." Richard II. and Richard III. were issued again in 1598, and The First Part of Henry IV. in 1599; and in all these cases the author's name was printed on the title-page. The Second Part of Henry IV. was doubtless written before the appearance of the First Part, in 1598, though we hear of no edition of it till 1600. For full statements on all these points, the reader must be again referred to our several Introductions.

Francis Meres has the honour of being the first critic of Shakespeare, that appeared in print. In 1598, he put forth a book entitled "*Palladis Tamia*, Wit's Treasury, being the Second Part of Wit's Commonwealth." One division of the work is headed "A comparative Discourse of our English Poets, with the Greek, Latin, and Italian Poets;" and in it we have, among divers other references to Shakespeare, the following:

"As the soul of Euphorbus was thought to live in Pythagoras, so the sweet, witty soul of Ovid lives in mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare: witness his Venus and Adonis, his Lucrece, his sugared Sonnets among his private friends, &c.

"As Plautus and Seneca are accounted the best for comedy and tragedy among the Latins; so Shakespeare among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage. For comedy, witness his Gentlemen of Verona, his Errors, his Love's Labour's Lost, his Love's Labour's Won, his Midsummer-Night's Dream, and his Merchant of Venice; for tragedy, his Richard II., Richard III., Henry IV., King John, Titus Andronicus, and his Romeo and Juliet.

"As Epius Stolo said that the Muses would speak with Plautus' tongue, if they would speak Latin; so I say that the Muses would speak with Shakespeare's fine-filed phrase, if they would speak English."

The nature of this writer's purpose did not require him to mention all the plays then known to be Shakespeare's: he needed but to specify such and so many as would "witness" his point. Since the time of Farmer, "Love's Labour's Won" has commonly been supposed to be the original name of All's Well that Ends Well. We have no doubt that such was the case. The play yields strong internal evidence of having been "written at two different and rather distant periods of the Poet's life;" and the title was probably changed at the revisal. Reckoning, then, the original Pericles, the three Parts of Henry VI., The Taming of the Shrew, and the two Parts of Henry IV., along with the others mentioned by Meres, we have eighteen plays written by 1598, when the Poet was thirty-four years of age, and had most likely been in the theatre not far from twelve years. It is not improbable, as we have already seen, that the original Hamlet should also be added to this list.

Shakespeare was now decidedly at the head of the English drama: he had little cause to fear rivalry; he could well afford to be generous; and any play that had his approval would be likely to pass. Ben Jonson, whose name has a peculiar right to be coupled with his, was ten years his junior, and was working with that learned and sinewy diligence which marked his character. We have it on the sound au-

thority of Rowe, that Shakespeare lent a helping hand to honest Ben, and on an occasion that does equal credit to them both. "His acquaintance," says he, "with Ben Jonson began with a remarkable piece of humanity and good-nature. Mr. Jonson, who was at that time altogether unknown to the world, had offered one of his plays to the players, in order to have it acted; and the persons into whose hands it was put, after having turned it carelessly and superciliously over, were just upon returning it to him, with an ill-natured answer that it would be of no service to their company; when Shakespeare luckily cast his eye upon it, and found something so well in it, as to engage him first to read it through, and afterwards to recommend Mr. Jonson and his writings to the public."

Gifford, to whom we owe a clear vindication of Jonson from the reproach of malignity towards our Poet, undertook to impugn Rowe's account in this particular. He found in Henslowe's Diary that a piece there called "Umers" was acted eleven times by the Lord Admiral's players at the Rose in 1597; and he supposed this "Umers" to have been Every Man in his Humour, which was Jonson's earliest play, and was first performed by the Lord Chamberlain's company in 1598, Shakespeare himself being one of the principal actors in it. Mr. Collier, on the other hand, has fully justified Rowe's statement from Gifford's attack. The argument may be comprised in a nutshell. In 1616, Jonson put forth an authorised edition of his works, and on the title-page states that Every Man in his Humour was "acted in the year 1598 by the then Lord Chamberlain's servants;" and at the end of the play adds, — "This comedy was first acted in the year 1598." This is pretty good evidence as to when and by whom the play was first acted. Moreover, Henslowe's accounts show no pecuniary transactions with Jonson before August, 1598. Now, Jonson was in very needy circumstances, and Henslowe was very exact in all entries relating to money. If, then, the play had been used so much under

Henslowe's management in 1597, it is not at all likely, either that Jonson would have waited so long for what he had earned, or that any payments made to him would not have appeared in the manager's books. Finally, in 1598, Jonson had a quarrel with one of Henslowe's leading actors named Gabriel Spencer: they met, fought, and Spencer was killed. In a letter written by Henslowe to Alleyn, on the 26th of September, that year, the event is thus spoken of: "Since you were with me, I have lost one of my company, which hurteth me greatly; that is Gabriel, for he is slain in Hoxton Fields by the hands of Benjamin Jonson, Bricklayer." Alleyn was the Burbage of that company; and if Jonson had been as well known among them as, by Gifford's account, he must have been, it is scarce credible that Henslowe would have spoken of him to Alleyn in that manner.[1]

[1] Edward Alleyn appears to have outstripped all the other players of his time in "putting money in his purse." In 1604, he purchased the manor of Kenuington for £1065, and, the next year, that of Lewisham and Dulwich for £5000, £2000 being paid down, and the rest left upon mortgage. All this would be nearly equal to $150,000 in our day! Alleyn was the leading actor at the Rose theatre on the Bankside, near the Globe, till 1600, in which year the company removed to a new house called the Fortune, in a different part of the city. Collier conjectures that this removal was partly occasioned by their inability to stand the competition of their rivals of the Globe. It seems to have been mainly at the Fortune that Alleyn made his fortune. His repute as an actor is indicated by some lines probably written about this time, which we subjoin, merely adding that "Will's new play" was doubtless Shakespeare's, and "Roscius Richard," Burbage:

"Sweete Nedde, nowe wynue an other wager
For thine old Frend and fellow-stager.
Tarlton himselfe thou doest excell,
And Bentley beate, and conquer Knell,
And now shall Kempe orecome as well.
The moneyes downe, the place the Hope;
Phillippes shall hide his head, and Pope.
Fear not, the victorie is thine;
Thou still as macheles Ned shalt shyne:
If Roscius Richard foames and fumes,
The Globe shall have but emptie roomes,

All which may be regarded, perhaps, as putting Rowe's statement out of danger. And his point has the further support, which he probably did not know of, that Jonson's earliest known play was, if Jonson's own testimony may be taken in the matter, first acted in 1598, and by "the then Lord Chamberlain's servants." How nobly the Poet's gentle and judicious act of kindness was remembered, is shown by Jonson's superb verses "To the Memory of my beloved, the Author, Mr. William Shakespeare, and what he hath left us," prefixed to the folio of 1623; enough of themselves to confer an immortality both on the writer and the subject of them.

We shall hardly have a fitter place for introducing another passage from Jonson, which must not be omitted. It is from his Discoveries, written in 1640: "I remember, the players have often mentioned it as an honour to Shakespeare, that in his writing, whatsoever he penn'd, he never blotted out a line. My answer hath been, Would he had blotted a thousand! which they thought a malevolent speech. I had not told posterity this, but for their ignorance, who choose that circumstance to commend their friend by, wherein he most faulted; and to justify mine own candour, for I lov'd the man, and do honour his memory, on this side idolatry, as much as any. He was indeed honest, and of an open and free nature; had an excellent phantasy, brave notions, and gentle expressions; wherein he flow'd with that facility, that sometime it was necessary he should be stopp'd: *Sufflaminandus erat*, as Augustus said of Haterius. His wit was in his own power; would the rule of it had been so too. Many times he fell into those things, could not escape laughter:

> If thou doest act; and Willes newe playe
> Shall be rehearst some other daye.
> Consent, then, Nedde; do us this grace:
> Thou canst not faile in anie case;
> For in the triall, come what maye,
> All sides shall brave Ned Allin saye."

as when he said in the person of Cæsar, one speaking to him, 'Cæsar, thou dost me wrong;' he replied, 'Cæsar did never wrong but with just cause:' and such like, which were ridiculous.[2] But he redeemed his vices with his virtues. There was ever more in him to be praised than to be pardoned."

We have already seen something of the position which, before 1598, Shakespeare had attained among the Stratfordians, in respect of money matters. It seems that Richard Quiney, whose son Thomas afterwards married the Poet's youngest daughter, was in London a good deal that year on business, for himself and others. Mr. Halliwell prints, for the first time, a letter directed thus: "To my loving son, Richard Quiney, at the Bell in Carter-lane, deliver these, in London." The following is a part of the contents: "If you bargain with Wm. Sha., or receive money there, or bring your money home, you may. I see how knit stockings be sold; there is great buying of them at Ayshone. Edward Wheat and Harry, your brother's man, were both at Evesham this day se'nnight, and, as I heard, bestowed £20 there in knit hose: wherefore, I think, you may do good, if you can have money." This letter is without any date, but it evidently connects with another written to Shakespeare, as follows:

"Loving countryman: I am bold of you, as of a friend, craving your help with £30, upon Mr. Bushell's and my

[2] For an explanation of this matter, see Julius Cæsar, Act iii. sc. 1, note 5. — One of the main points in this extract is supported by the editorial address of Heminge and Condell, prefixed to the folio of 1623: "The Author, as he was a happy imitator of Nature, was a most gentle expresser of it. His mind and hand went together; and what he thought, *he uttered with that easiness, that we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers.*" Jonson might well regret that the Poet did not blot a good deal more. Still we do not believe his writing was by any means so extemporaneous as many have supposed. Several of his plays are known to have been rewritten; and it is not known how many of them were not.

security, or Mr. Mytten's with me. Mr. Roswell is not come to London as yet, and I have especial cause. You shall friend me much in helping me out of all the debts I owe in London, I thank God; and much quiet my mind, which would not be indebted. I am now towards the Court, in hope of answer for the despatch of my business. You shall neither lose credit nor money by me, the Lord willing: and now but persuade yourself so, as I hope, and you shall not need to fear, but, with all hearty thankfulness, I will hold my time, and content your friend; and, if we bargain further, you shall be the pay-master yourself. My time bids me hasten to an end, and so I commit this to your care, and hope of your help. I fear I shall not be back this night from the Court. Haste: The Lord be with you, and with us all, Amen!

"From the Bell, in Carter-lane, the 25th October, 1598.

"Yours in all kindness,

"Ric. Quiney."

"To my loving good Friend and Countryman, Mr. Wm. Shakespeare, deliver these."

Not a single private letter written by Shakespeare nas ever been found, and this is the only one written *to* him, that has come to light. Quiney's application for money seems to have met with a favourable response; for on the same day he wrote to Abraham Sturley, the Stratford alderman, whom we have already heard of; and on the 4th of November Sturley wrote him a lengthy reply, with a direction running thus: "To my most loving brother, Mr. Richard Quiney, at the Bell in Carter-lane, at London, give these." In this reply we have the following: "Your letter of the 25th of October came to my hands the last of the same at night, per Greenway; which imported a stay of suits by Sir Edward Greville's advice; . . . and that our countryman, Mr. Wm. Shak., would procure us money, which I will like of, as I shall hear when, and where. and how; and I pray, let

not go that occasion, if it may sort to any indifferent conditions."

The good people of Stratford, it seems, were at that time unusually distressed, not only by reason of the dearth and scarceness already mentioned, but also because of some recent fires in the town. Besides these, there were yet other troubles: Sturley in one of his letters to Quiney informs him, "Our great bell is broken, and Wm. Wiatt is mending the pavement of the bridge." Quiney's business "towards the Court" is explained in another part of the same letter: "There might, by Sir Edward Greville, some means be made to the Knights of Parliament for an ease and discharge of such taxes and subsidies wherewith our town is like to be charged, and, I assure you I am in great fear and doubt, by no means able to pay. Sir Edward Greville is gone to Bristol, and from thence to London, as I hear; who very well knoweth our estates, and will be willing to do us any good." In their straits, they evidently thought it no small advantage to have a thriving countryman in London, whose recent doings were proof that he had not forgotten Stratford.

These notices, slight as they are, enable us to form some tolerable conjecture as to how the Poet was getting on at the age of thirty-four. Such details of money transactions may not seem very interesting in a Life of the greatest of poets; but we have clear evidence that he took a lively interest in them, and was a good hand at managing them. He had learned by experience, no doubt, that "money is a good soldier, and will on;" and that, "if money go before, all ways do lie open." And the thing carries this good, if no other, that it tells us a man may be something of a poet without being either above or below the common affairs of life. Shakespeare was doubtless apt enough for any occasion whereby an honest penny might be turned: the chamberlain's accounts for this year show an entry of 10*d.* "paid to Mr. Shakespeare for one load of stone;" used, perhaps

by Mr. Wiatt in "mending the pavement of the bridge. And he appears to have been driving his pecuniary interests in other quarters hitherto not heard of. Mr. Hunter lately discovered at Carlton Ride a subsidy roll of 1598, in which the Poet was assessed on property of the value of £5 13*s* 4*d*., in the parish of St. Helen's, Bishopsgate. Mr. Hunter infers from it that he then lived in that part of the metropolis; but his name has *affid.* written against it, which Mr. Halliwell thinks may have been intended to mark him as one who was required to produce a certificate or *affidavit* of non-residence.

That we may not have to recur too often to the rather unpoetical subject of money, it may be well now to follow out the Poet's dealings in that line till some years later. On the 1st of May, 1602, was executed a deed of conveyance, whereby he became the owner of a hundred and seven acres of arable land in the town of Old Stratford, bought of William and John Combe, for the sum of £320. Besides the land itself, there was also a right of "common of pasture for sheep, horse, kine, and other cattle, in the fields of Old Stratford," attached to it. The Poet was not in Stratford at the time, as appears by the lack of his signature, and by the memorandum on the deed, — "Sealed and delivered to Gilbert Shakespeare, to the use of the within-named William Shakespeare, in the presence of" five witnesses, whose names are subscribed. Which shows that the business was transacted by Gilbert for his brother William. It also leads us naturally to the presumption that the Poet's Stratford affairs generally were left in the care of his brother, when himself was in London. On the 28th of September, the same year, he became the owner of a copyhold house in Walker-street, near New Place, surrendered to him by Walter Getley. This property was held under the manor of Rowington: the surrender took place at a court-baron of the manor; and it appears from the Court Roll, that the Poet was not present at the time, there being a proviso that the property should

remain in the hands of the Lady of the manor till the purchaser had done suit and service in the court. In November following, he made another purchase of Hercules Underhill for £60. The original fine levied on the occasion is preserved in the Chapter House, Westminster, and describes the property as consisting of "one messuage, two barns, two gardens, and two orchards, with their appurtenances, in Stratford-upon-Avon."

The next purchase by him, that has come to light, was made three years later. It appears from the letter of Sturley, quoted near the close of our preceding Chapter, that in 1598 it was thought "a very fit pattern to move him to deal in the matter of our tithes." This was a matter wherein very much depended on good management; and, as the town had a yearly rent from the tithes, it was for the public interest to have them well managed; and the moving of Shakespeare to deal in the matter sprang most likely from confidence in his practical judgment and skill. The great tithes of "corn, grain, blade, and hay," and also the small tithes of "wool, lamb, hemp, flax, and other small and privy tithes," in Stratford, Old Stratford, Welcombe, and Bishopton, had been leased as far back as 1544 for the term of ninety-two years: consequently, in 1605, the lease had thirty-one years yet to run. On the 24th of July, that year, this unexpired term of the lease was bought in by Shakespeare for the sum of £440. In the indenture of conveyance, he is styled "William Shakespeare, of Stratford-upon-Avon, *gentleman*." A receipt contained in the deed shows that the purchase-money was all paid before the deed was executed. The vendor was Ralph Huband, Esquire, of Ippesley. Both the indenture and the "bond from John Huband to William Shakespeare for the due performance of contract" are printed at length in Halliwell's Life.

One more item will dispose of money matters for the present. One Philip Rogers, it seems, had at several times bought malt of Shakespeare, to the amount of £1 15*s.* 10*d*

In 1604, the Poet, not being able to get payment, filed in the Stratford Court of Record a declaration of suit against him; which probably had the desired effect, as nothing more is heard of the matter. This item is of peculiar interest, as it shows him engaged in other pursuits than those relating to the stage.

We have purposely deferred till now any mention of the grant of arms to John Shakespeare, because there can be no doubt that the whole thing originated with his son William. The matter is involved in a good deal of perplexity and confusion; the claims of the son being confounded with those of the father, in order, apparently, that out of the two together might be made a good or at least a plausible case. Our Poet, the son of a glover, or of a yeoman, had evidently set his heart on being heralded into a gentleman; and, as his profession of actor stood in the way of his purpose, the application was made in his father's name. Nor can we avoid suspecting that the statement of "plain speaking Harrison," written some years before the time we are now upon, may be applied to this case: "Whosoever studieth the laws of the realm, whoso abideth in the University giving his mind to his book, or professeth physic and the liberal sciences, or, besides his service in the room of a captain in the wars, or good counsel given at home, whereby his commonwealth is benefited, can live without manual labour, and thereto is able and will bear the port, charge, and countenance of a gentleman, *he shall for money have a coat and arms bestowed upon him by heralds, (who in the charter of the same do of custom pretend antiquity and service, and many gay things,)* and thereunto, being made so good cheap, be called master, which is the title that men give to esquires and gentlemen, and reputed for a gentleman ever after."

The Heralds' College shows a draft of arms granted and confirmed to John Shakespeare by Sir William Dethick, in 1596. In this draft Sir William justifies the grant on the ground of his having been "solicited, and by credible report

informed, that John Shakespeare's parents and late antecessors were for their valiant and faithful service advanced and rewarded by that most prudent prince, King Henry VII., since which time they have continued at those parts in good reputation and credit; and that the said John had married Mary, daughter and one of the heirs of Robert Arden, of Wilmecote, gentleman." Mary Arden's ancestors were indeed advanced and rewarded by Henry VII.; but the records of that reign have been searched in vain for any trace of advancement or reward to any person named Shakespeare. There can be little question, therefore, that what was true of the Poet through his mother, was here, by accident or design, ascribed to his father. At the bottom of the draft are written several memoranda, as follows: "This John hath a pattern thereof under Clarencieux Cook's hand in paper, twenty years past. — A justice of peace, and was bailiff, officer, and chief of the town of Stratford-upon-Avon, fifteen or sixteen years past. — That he hath lands and tenements of good wealth and substance, £500. — That he married a daughter and heir of Arden, a gentleman of worship."

It appears that Dethick was afterwards called to account for having made improper grants of arms, and Shakespeare was one of the cases alleged against him; and the probability is, that these memoranda were added at that time, for the purpose of clearing up the case. At all events, his statements were good for that end, but they were not true. Robert Cooke, Clarencieux King at Arms, was in office from 1566 to 1592, and the records of that period contain no mention of any such draft of arms. Moreover, John Shakespeare was not a justice of peace by commission, as Dethick implies, but only so *ex officio*, as bailiff and head alderman of Stratford. Nor was he worth £500, though his son probably was.[3]

[3] I have seen a long and curious statement of the complaints made against Dethick for granting arms improperly "He com

A confirmation of arms, it seems, was not final; one more step, called an *exemplification* of arms, was necessary before the grantee became a full-blown gentleman. John Shakespeare, as appears from a deed quoted in Chapter I., note 23, was described as "yeoman" in 1597. We subjoin the greater part of an instrument whereby he fully graduated out of the yeomanry state:

"DRAFT OF A GRANT OF ARMS TO JOHN SHAKESPEARE, 1599.

"To all and singular noble and gentlemen of all estates and degrees bearing arms, to whom these presents shall come, William Dethick, Garter, Principal King of Arms of England, and William Camden, *alias* Clarencieux King of Arms for the south-east and west parts of this realm, sendeth greetings.

"Know ye, that in all nations and kingdoms the record and remembrances of the valiant facts and virtuous dispositions of worthy men have been made known and divulged by certain shields of arms and tokens of chivalry; the grant and testimony whereof appertaincth unto us by virtue of our offices from the Queen's most excellent Majesty, and her Highness' most noble and victorious progenitors. Wherefore, being solicited, and by credible report informed, that John Shakespeare, now of Stratford-upon-Avon in the county of Warwick, gent., whose parent, great grandfather, and late antecessor, for his faithful and approved service to the

mitted very many and grosse abuses, as, namely, the giveing of armes, yea, and of some of the nobilitie, to base and ignoble persons; as Yorcke Heraulde hath at large sett downe in a booke delivered to the King's majesty. He falsefyed pedegrees alsoe, as that of Harbourne being of xii. descents, wherein he made vi. knights which God nor man never knewe; nor the name himselfe, when hee was called before the commissioners, could justify no further then his grandfather, who was reputed to be an honest man, but of mean fortune." — *Ashmolean MSS.* It is quite apparent from this that statements in Dethick's grants are not historical evidence of any worth. — HALLIWELL.

late most prudent prince, King Henry VII., of famous memory, was advanced and rewarded with lands and tenements given to him in those parts of Warwickshire, where they have continued by some descents in good reputation and credit; and for that the said John Shakespeare having married the daughter and one of the heirs of Robert Arden, of Wilmecote in the said county, and also produced this his ancient coat of arms, heretofore assigned to him whilst he was her Majesty's officer, and bailiff of that town; in consideration of the premises, and for the encouragement of his posterity, unto whom such blazon of arms and achievements of inheritance from their said mother, by the ancient custom and laws of arms, may lawfully descend; we the said Garter and Clarencieux have assigned, granted, and confirmed, and by these presents have *exemplified* unto the said John Shakespeare and to his posterity, that shield and coat of arms, &c. In witness and testimony whereof we have subscribed our names, and fastened the seals of our offices. Given at the Office of Arms, London, the —— day of —— in the forty-second year of the reign of our most gracious sovereign Lady Elizabeth, &c., 1599."

Shakespeare had now grown so strong in popular favour as to have the offspring of other men's brains fathered upon him. We refer to The Passionate Pilgrim, which was published as his by W. Jaggard in 1599. It is evident enough that the publisher, having got hold of a few of the Poet's Sonnets, as these were floating about "among his private friends," and having extracted two or three more from one of his printed plays, bundled them up with some work of other writers, and set the whole forth as Shakespeare's. In 1612, he issued a third edition of the same, adding two pieces from a volume published by Thomas Heywood in 1609. In 1612, Heywood published his Apology for Actors, with an epistle to his publisher prefixed, in which, after referring to his former volume, he has the following: "Here, likewise, I must necessarily insert a manifest injury done me

in that work, by taking the two Epistles of Paris to Helen, and Helen to Paris, and printing them in a less volume, under the name of another; which may put the world in opinion I might steal them from him, and he, to do himself right, hath since published them in his own name. But as I must acknowledge my lines not worthy his patronage, under whom he hath published them, so the author I know much offended with Mr. Jaggard that, altogether unknown to him, presumed to make so bold with his name."

A similar trick was played upon the Poet in 1600, in an edition of the Life of Sir John Oldcastle. But the publisher, in this case, seems to have been overhauled in season, and forced to cancel Shakespeare's name, as several copies of the edition are known to be without it. The same year, 1600, five more of his plays came from the press. These were A Midsummer-Night's Dream, The Merchant of Venice, Much Ado about Nothing, The Second Part of King Henry IV., and King Henry V. It appears, also, that As You Like It was then written; for it was entered at the Stationers' for publication, but locked up from the press under a "stay." It is probable that The Merry Wives of Windsor was also then in being, though no edition of it came out till 1602. This, as well as the edition of King Henry V., two years before, was very imperfect, and manifestly fraudulent, as may be seen from our Introductions. The same is true of the first edition of Hamlet, which appeared in 1603; but another issue, made the next year, in which the play was given "enlarged to almost as much again as it was," shows no signs of being from a "stolen and surreptitious copy." Mr. Collier thinks that all the issues we have thus far mentioned were compassed by stealth and fraud. We can perceive no sufficient warrant for this; but it seems pretty clear that at least after 1600, with perhaps the single exception of Hamlet, the company did their best to keep Shakespeare's plays from getting into print.

A recent discovery has ascertained that Twelfth Night was

played at the Readers' Feast in the Middle Temple, on the 2d of February, 1602. Among the spectators was one John Manningham, a barrister, who left a Diary containing some notes of the performance. The passage is given in our Introduction to the play, and so need not be quoted here. The Diary was stowed away among other manuscripts in the British Museum, where Mr. Collier unearthed it in 1828.[4] To the same indefatigable hand we owe the discovery that Othello was performed as a part of the entertainment given by Lord Keeper Egerton to the Queen at Harefield in the summer of 1602. This appears by an entry of £10 paid "to Burbage's players for Othello" on the 6th of August, that year. Of course they were here styled Burbage's players, because Burbage was regarded as the leading actor among them; and it is known from other sources that this great stage-artist sustained the part of the Moor.[5] Adding the

[4] The same Diary gives the following anecdote under the date of March 13, 1602: "Upon a tyme, when Burbidge played Rich. 3, there was a citizen greue soe farr in liking with him, that before shee went from the play, shee appointed him to come that night unto hir by the name of Rich. 3. Shakespeare, overhearing their conclusion, went before, was intertained, and at his game ere Burbidge came. Then, message being brought that Rich. the 3d was at the dore, Shakespeare caused returne to be made, that William the Conqueror was before Rich. the 3d. Shakespeare's name Willm. — Mr. Towse." It is very remarkable that, before the finding of this Diary, the same anecdote was current as a tradition. There is some question who was Manningham's authority for the story. Mr. Collier says the name of Mr. Towse often occurs as the writer's source of information; but in this the name is blotted so as to cause some uncertainty whether it be Towse or Tooly. The point is of some consequence as regards the authenticity of the anecdote, for Nicholas Tooley was an actor in the same company with Burbage. It was no uncommon thing for anecdotes of other persons to be applied to Shakespeare; and it is not unlikely that in this case the coincidence of names may have suggested a similar application. The demands of historical candour must be our excuse for noticing the matter at all.

[5] A manuscript Epitaph on Burbage, who died in 1619, has lately come to light, in which the leading parts acted by him are

six plays which we now hear of for the first time, or, including Hamlet, the seven, we have twenty-five, written before the end of 1602, when the Poet was in his thirty-ninth year.

The great Queen died on the 24th of March, 1603. We have abundant proof that she was, both by her presence and her purse, a frequent and steady patron of the Drama, especially as its interests were represented in the Lord Chamberlain's Servants. Everybody, no doubt, has heard the tradition of her having been so taken with Falstaff in King Henry IV., that she requested the Poet to continue the character through another play, and to represent him in love; whereupon he wrote The Merry Wives of Windsor.

enumerated. The following extract will show in what vein of Shakespeare he worked:

"No more young Hamlet, though but scant of breath,
Shall cry, Revenge! for his dear father's death:
Poor Romeo never more shall tears beget
For Juliet's love, and cruel Capulet:
Harry shall not be seen as King or Prince;
They died with thee, dear Dick,——
Not to revive again. Jeronimo
Shall cease to mourn his son Horatio:
Edward shall lack a representative;
And Crookback, as befits, shall cease to live:
Tyrant Macbeth, with unwash'd bloody hand,
We vainly now may hope to understand:
Brutus and Marcius henceforth must be dumb;
For ne'er thy like upon our stage shall come,
To charm the faculty of ears and eyes,
Unless we could command the dead to rise.
Heart-broke Philaster, and Amintas too,
Are lost forever, with the red-hair'd Jew
Which sought the bankrupt Merchant's pound of flesh,
By woman lawyer caught in his own mesh.
And his whole action he would change with ease
From ancient Lear to youthful Pericles.
But let me not forget one chiefest part
Wherein, beyond the rest, he mov'd the heart;
The grieved Moor, made jealous by a slave,
Who sent his wife to fill a timeless grave,
Then slew himself upon the bloody bed.
All these and many more, with him are dead."

Whatever embellishments may have been added, there is nothing incredible in the substance of the tradition; while the approved taste and judgment of this female king, in matters of literature and art, give, we think, strong warranty for it. However, the subject is argued enough in our Introduction to the play; and all that we could say upon it now would be but a repetition of what is presented there.

Elizabeth knew how to unbend in the noble delectations of art, without abating her dignity as queen, or forgetting her duty as the mother of her people. Her last act of patronage to the drama is shown by the following entry in the accounts of the Treasurer of the Chamber: "To John Hem inge and the rest of his company, servants to the Lord Chamberlain, upon the Council's warrant, dated at Whitehall the 20th of April, 1603, for their pains and expenses in presenting before the late Queen's Majesty two plays, the one upon St. Stephen's day at night, and the other upon Candlemas day at night, for each of which they were allowed, by way of her Majesty's reward, ten pounds; amounting in all to £20." St. Stephen's day and Candlemas were the 26th of December and the 2d of February. Before the latter date, the Queen had taken Sir Robert Carey by the hand, and said to him, "Robin, I am not well;" and she was never well after that, till she died.

If the patronage of King James fell below hers in wisdom, it was certainly not deficient in warmth. The Poet's friend Southampton was among those who had been most favourable to his succession; and one of his very first acts was to deliver that accomplished nobleman from the harsh durance in which the Queen's rigour had left him. Even before he left Edinburgh, James invited the Earl, then a prisoner in the Tower, to meet his friend and sovereign at York. On the 7th of May, the King arrived in London, which was then under a visitation of the plague. On the 17th, he ordered out a warrant from the Privy Seal for the issuing of a patent under the Great Seal, whereby the Lord Chamberlain's

players were taken into his immediate patronage under the title of "The King's Servants." The main part of the instrument is as follows:

"To all justices, mayors, sheriffs, constables, headboroughs, and other our officers and loving subjects, greeting: Know ye, that we, of our special grace, certain knowledge, and mere motion, have licenced and authorized, and by these patents do licence and authorize, these our servants, Laurence Fletcher, William Shakespeare, Richard Burbage, Augustine Phillips, John Heminge, Henry Condell, William Slye, Robert Armyn, Richard Cowley, and the rest of their associates, freely to use and exercise the art and faculty of playing comedies, tragedies, histories, &c., and such other like, as they have already studied, or hereafter shall use or study, as well for the recreation of our loving subjects, as for our solace and pleasure, when we shall think good to see them; and the said comedies, tragedies, histories, &c., to show and exercise publicly to their best commodity, when the infection of the plague shall decrease, as well within their now usual house called the Globe, as also within any town-halls or other convenient places within the liberties and freedom of any other city, university, town, or borough whatsoever within our realms and dominions. Willing and commanding you, and every of you, as you tender our pleasure, not only to permit and suffer them herein, without any your lets, hindrances, or molestations, but to be aiding and assisting to them, if any wrong be to them offered; and to allow them such former courtesies as hath been given to men of their place and quality: and also what further favour you shall show to these our servants for our sake, we shall take kindly at your hands."

In pursuance of this order a patent was issued under the Great Seal two days after. By a similar instrument, the Earl of Worcester's players, with Thomas Greene at their head, and Thomas Heywood, the celebrated dramatist, among them, became "servants unto our dearest wife Queen Anne."

Also, the Lord Admiral's company, at the head of whom was Edward Alleyn, received a like favour, creating them servants to the Prince of Wales.

It is of more consequence to observe, that here, for the first time, we meet with Laurence Fletcher, and him at the head of the company. And this brings us to a question that has been a good deal mooted, pro and con, namely, whether Shakespeare were ever in Scotland. It is pretty well established that the tragedy of Macbeth evinces such an acquaintance with Scottish scenes and events, as can hardly be accounted for, but on the supposal of the Poet's having been actually there. And it is certain that James, having no drama in his own country, began his patronage of English players some years before he succeeded to the English crown. Spottiswood, in his History of the Church of Scotland, informs us that in the end of the year 1599 there "happened some new jars betwixt the King and the ministers of Edinburgh, because of a company of English comedians, whom the King had licenced to play within the burgh." The passage is given more at length, along with some other points of the argument, in our Introduction to Macbeth. In Scotland, the legal year at that time ended with December, in which very month, as appears from the public records, these "English comedians" experienced the royal bounty to the extent of 333*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* But the players then in Edinburgh could not have been Shakespeare's company nor any part of it, because the accounts of the Treasurer of the Chamber show that the Lord Chamberlain's servants performed before Queen Elizabeth on the 26th of December, 1599.

This munificence of the Scottish King would naturally induce other English comedians to follow in the same track. The Treasurer's books just referred to have an entry of payment "to John Heminge and Richard Cowley, servants to the Lord Chamberlain, for three plays showed before her Highness on St. Stephen's day at night, Twelfth day at night, and Shrove-Tewsday at night." These were December 26th,

1600. and January 6th and March 3d, 1601. From that time nothing is heard of this company in London, till the performance of Twelfth Night at the Readers' Feast in the Middle Temple, on the 2d of February, 1602. During this very period, an English company, with Laurence Fletcher at their head, are found acting in Scotland. In December, 1601, the King's patronage to them reached the sum of 400*l*. While there, they made an excursion to Aberdeen, where the registers of the Town Council have the following entry, under the date of October 9th, 1601: "The Provost, Baillies, and Council ordain the sum of thirty-two marks to be given to the King's servants now in this burgh, who play comedies and stage-plays; by reason they are recommended by his Majesty's special letter, and have played some of their comedies in this burgh." Thirteen days after, on the 22d, a number of persons, described as "knights and gentlemen," received the highest honour the corporation of Aberdeen could bestow: they were admitted burgesses of the Guild; and among them we find "Laurence Fletcher, comedian to his Majesty."

All this, to be sure, does not prove that Shakespeare himself or any members of his company were then in Scotland. But it is somewhat remarkable, that in less than two years after, this same Laurence Fletcher is named first in the company, whom the King's patent recognises as "our servants." The presumption is certainly strong, that this company were the "King's servants" who had been "recommended by his Majesty's special letter" to the authorities of Aberdeen. And Knight justly observes, that "the terms of this patent exhibit towards the players of the Globe a favour and countenance, almost an affectionate solicitude for their welfare, which is scarcely reconcileable with a belief that they first became the King's players by virtue of this instrument." We will dismiss the subject with a short quotation from a paper "On the Site of Macbeth's Castle at Inverness," read to the Scottish Society of Antiquaries by John Anderson.

Esq., in 1828. "The extreme accuracy," says he, "with which Shakespeare has followed the minutiæ of Macbeth's career has given rise to the opinion, that he himself visited those scenes which are immortalized by his pen."

The event proved that the King's patent was not intended as a mere barren honour. During the spring and summer after his accession, playing was suspended in London, and most of the players scattered off into the country, by reason of the plague; nor was it till the 9th of April following that the city authorities received from the Court an order "to permit and suffer the three companies of players to the King, the Queen, and the Prince, publicly to exercise their plays in their several usual houses for that purpose." It appears, however, that Shakespeare was in London in October, 1603; for on the 20th of that month the wife of Edward Alleyn wrote to her husband, then in the country, of her having seen him. The letter is in some places defaced, so that the words cannot be made out; but a part of it has been given as follows: "About us the sickness doth cease, and likely more and more, by God's help, to cease. All the companies be come home, and well, for aught we know. . . . About a week ago there came a youth, who said he was Mr. Francis Chaloner's man, who would have borrowed £10, to have bought things for . . . and said he was known unto you, and Mr. Shakespeare of the Globe, who came . . . said he knew him not, only he heard of him that he was a rogue, . . . so he was glad we did not lend him the money. . . . Richard Jones went to seek and inquire after the fellow, and said he had lent him a horse. I fear me he gulled him, though he gulled not us. The youth was a pretty youth, and handsome in apparel: we know not what became of him."

Meanwhile, the King did not forget his players. During some part of the winter he kept his Court at Wilton, which was the seat of William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke; and the accounts of the Treasurer of the Chamber show an entry

of £30 paid to John Heminge "for the pains and expenses of himself and the rest of his company, in coming from Mortlake in the county of Surrey unto the Court, and there presenting before his Majesty one play on the 2d of December, by way of his Majesty's reward." In the Christmas season following, Shakespeare and his fellows presented six plays before the King and Prince at Hampton Court, receiving twenty nobles for each play. And the accounts just quoted from have an entry, February 8th, 1604, of £32 as "his Majesty's free gift to Richard Burbage, for the maintenance and relief of himself and the rest of his company;" they not being allowed, from fear of the plague, to play publicly in or near London, "till it should please God to settle the city in a more perfect health." The next Christmas season, in 1604–5, it appears from the Accounts of the Revels at Court, that no less than eleven plays, seven of them being Shakespeare's, were performed by the same company, "in the Banqueting-House at Whitehall." Of these seven, one was Measure for Measure, which is here met with for the first time; the other six were Othello, The Merry Wives of Windsor, The Comedy of Errors, Love's Labour's Lost, King Henry V., and The Merchant of Venice. On the 21st of January, £60 were paid "to John Heminge, one of his Majesty's players, for the pains and expenses of himself and the rest of his company, in presenting six plays before his Majesty."

This seems a proper place for introducing a statement that first appeared in Lintot's edition of Shakespeare's Poems, 1710: "That most learned Prince, and great patron of learning, King James the First, was pleased with his own hand to write an amicable letter to Mr. Shakespeare; which letter, though now lost, remained long in the hands of Sir William Davenant, as a credible person now living can testify." We "like not the security." Dr. Farmer conjectured that the letter might have been written by way of return for the compliment paid to the Stuart family in Macbeth. Prob-

ably the conjecture may as well be left, along with the letter itself, to the credulity or incredulity of the reader. Somewhat more of credit may be due to an epigram copied by Mr. Collier from "a coeval manuscript" in his possession:

"SHAKESPEARE ON THE KING.

"Crowns have their compass, length of days their date
Triumphs their tomb, felicity her fate:
Of nought but earth can earth make us partaker,
But knowledge makes a king most like his Maker."

Mr. Collier adds, — "We have seen these lines in more than one other old manuscript; and, as they were constantly attributed to Shakespeare, and are in no respect unworthy of his pen, we have little doubt of their authenticity."

On the 30th of January, 1604, Samuel Daniel, one of the smaller stars, but yet a star, in that constellation of poets that shed such lustre on the age, was appointed Master of the Queen's Revels. Soon after, he wrote to Lord Ellesmere a letter thanking him for the appointment; in which we have the following: "I cannot but know that I am less deserving than some that sued by other of the nobility unto her Majesty for this room. If Mr. Drayton, my good friend, had been chosen, I should not have murmured, for sure I am he would have filled it most excellently; but it seemeth to mine humble judgment, that one who is the author of plays now daily presented on the public stages of London, and the possessor of no small gains, and moreover himself an actor in the King's company of comedians, could not with reason pretend to be the Master of the Queen's Majesty's Revels, forasmuch as he would sometimes be asked to approve and allow of his own writings. Therefore he, and more of like quality, cannot justly be disappointed, because, through your Honour's gracious interposition, the chance was haply mine."

The allusion here is clearly to Shakespeare. And we thus learn that he was at the time one of the King's company, and that he, or others for him, had made some interest to

get the place which fell to Daniel. The children, formerly known as the choir-boys of the Chapel Royal, had lately been taken into the Queen's service as a set of juvenile players, and the duties of the office in question were, to superintend their performances, and appoint what they should perform. The place was probably sought by Shakespeare in the purpose of retiring from the stage. As Master of the Queen's Revels, he would of course have borne in certain matters the royal authority, and been brought into frequent personal intercourse with Majesty. It was most likely his position as an actor, and not as an author, that worked against his wish in this particular; and perhaps the lines quoted from Davies' Scourge of Folly in our third Chapter had reference to his failing of the appointment:

> "Hadst thou not play'd some kingly parts in sport,
> Thou hadst been a companion for a king,
> And been a king among the meaner sort."

In another poem entitled Humour's Heaven on Earth, 1609. Davies alludes to certain "stage-players," and to Fortune's treatment of them, thus:

> "Some follow'd her by acting all men's parts:
> These on a stage she rais'd (in scorn) to fall,
> And made them mirrors by their acting arts,
> Wherein men saw their faults, though ne'er so small;
> *Yet some she guerdon'd not to their deserts.*"

In a marginal note he gives "W. S., R. B." as the initials of those whom Fortune had not duly rewarded; which initials clearly point to William Shakespeare and Richard Burbage as the persons meant.[6]

[6] The same writer, in his Microcosmus, 1603, has the following lines, wherein allusion is made, apparently, to the Poet's cxi. th Sonnet, though the latter had not then been printed:

> "Players, I love ye and your quality,
> As ye are men that pastime not abus'd;
> And some I love for painting poesy,
> And say fell Fortune cannot be excus'd,
> That hath for better uses you refus'd;

At what time the Poet carried into effect his purpose of retirement, is not precisely known. That his powers as an actor were not equal to his ambition of excellence, is evident enough from his Sonnet xxix. And the Sonnets cx. and cxi. reveal in unmistakeable language how keenly he felt the disrepute that adhered to his calling, and how earnestly he longed to be clear of it. His name is found as one of the actors in Ben Jonson's Sejanus, in 1603. Jonson's Volpone was brought out at the Globe in 1605, and Shakespeare's name does not occur among the actors. We have seen that on the 9th of April, 1604, the city authorities received an order from Court to permit the players to resume their performances in London. A copy of this paper has been found among the relics preserved at Dulwich College, and appended to it is a list of the King's company at that date, in the following order: "Burbage, Shakespeare, Fletcher, Phillips, Condell, Heminge, Armyn, Slye, Cowley, Ostler, Day." Augustine Phillips, who ranked well as a comic actor, died in May, 1605; and in his will he bequeathed "a thirty-shillings piece of gold" to Shakespeare as one of his "friends and *fellows*;" but this need not infer that the Poet still kept up a fellowship with him on the stage. Heminge and Condell, in their Dedication of the folio of 1623, say they have collected the plays, "only to keep the memory of so worthy a friend and *fellow* alive, as was our Shakespeare."

On the whole, there can be little question that the Poet ceased to be an actor in the summer of 1604. In the following winter the company got into trouble by bringing im-

> Wit, courage, good shape, good parts, and all goo ,
> As long as all these goods are no worse us'd:
> And though the stage doth stain pure gentle blood,
> Yet generous ye are in mind and mood."

Here again, in a marginal note to the third line, he gives "W. S., R B." as the initials of the persons meant. Davies was a man of pure character and conversation; so that his testimony is exceedingly valuable as regards the morals and manners of the great Poet and great actor.

proper and offensive matters upon the stage; and their course was such as strongly to infer that his sound discretion and great influence had been withdrawn.

Up to this time, besides the plays already mentioned, Measure for Measure is the only one that is certainly known to have been written. Nevertheless, we have very little doubt that Troilus and Cressida, Timon of Athens, and Julius Cæsar were then in being, though probably not all of them in the shape they now bear. Reckoning these four, we have twenty-nine of the plays written when the Poet was forty years of age, and had been in the work but about eighteen years! Time, indeed, has left us few traces of the process, but what a magnificent treasure of results! If Shakespeare had done no more, he would have stood the greatest intellect of the world. How all alive must those eighteen years have been with the most intense and varied exertion! His quick discernment, his masterly tact, his grace of manners, and his fertility of expedients would needs make him the soul of the establishment: doubtless the light of his eye and the life of his hand were in all its movements and plans. Besides, the compass and accuracy of information displayed in his writings prove him to have been, for that age, a profound and voluminous student of books. Portions of classical and of continental literature were accessible to him in translations. Nor are we without strong reasons for believing that, in addition to his "small Latin and less Greek," he found or made time, amidst all his other labours, to form a tolerable reading acquaintance with Italian and French. Chaucer, too, "the day-star," and Spenser, "the sunrise," of English poetry, were pouring their beauty round his walks. From all these, and from the growing richness and abundance of contemporary literature, his all-gifted and all-grasping mind no doubt greedily took in and quickly digested whatever was adapted to please his taste, or enrich his intellect, or assist his art.

Some question has been made, whether Shakespeare were

a member of the celebrated convivial club established by Sir Walter Raleigh, and which held its sessions at the Mermaid-tavern. And, sure enough, we have no fact or authority that directly certifies his membership of that choice institution; though there are divers things inferring it so strongly as to leave no reasonable doubt on the subject. His convivialities certainly ran in that circle of wits several of whom are directly known to have belonged to it; and among them all there was not one whose then acknowledged merits gave him a better title to its privileges. Gifford, speaking of this merry parliament of genius at the Mermaid, says, — "Here, for many years, Ben Jonson repaired, with Shakespeare, Beaumont, Fletcher, Selden, Cotton, Carew, Martin, Donne, and many others, whose names, even at this distant period, call up a mingled feeling of reverence and respect."

It does not, indeed, necessarily follow from Shakespeare's facility and plenipotence of wit in writing, that he could shine at those extempore "flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar." But, besides the natural inference that way, we have the statement of honest Aubrey, that "he was very good company, and of a very ready and pleasant smoothe wit." Francis Beaumont, who was a prominent member of this jovial senate, and to whom Shirley applies the fine hyperbolism that "he talked a comedy," was born in 1586, and died in 1615. We cannot doubt that he had our Poet, among others, in his eye when he wrote those celebrated lines to Ben Jonson, which are not so well known but that they must be quoted here:

"Methinks, the little wit I had is lost
Since I saw you; for wit is like a rest
Held up at tennis, which men do the best
With the best gamesters. What things have we seen
Done at the Mermaid! heard words that have been
So nimble, and so full of subtile flame,
As if that every one from whence they came
Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,
And had resolv'd to live a fool the rest
Of his dull life; then, when there hath been thrown
Wit able enough to justify the town

For three days past; wit, that might warrant be
For the whole city to talk foolishly
Till that were cancell'd: and, when that was gone,
We left an air behind us, which alone
Was able to make the two next companies
Right witty; though but downright fools, mere wise."

Thomas Fuller, though not born till 1608, was afterwards acquainted with some of the old Mermaid wits, and wrote a good part of his Worthies of England before the murder of King Charles, in 1649. In his Worthies of Warwickshire, we have the following, which is worth quoting more fully than has commonly been done:

"William Shakespeare was born at Stratford-on-Avon in this county; in whom three eminent poets may seem in some sort to be compounded. 1. *Martial*, in the warlike sound of his surname, (whence some may conjecture him of a military extraction,) *Hasti-vibrans*, or Shake-speare. 2 *Ovid*, the most natural and witty of all poets. 3. *Plautus*, who was an exact comedian, yet never any scholar, as our Shakespeare, if alive, would confess himself. Add to all these, that, though his genius generally was jocular, and inclined him to festivity, yet he could, when so disposed, be solemn and serious, as appears by his tragedies: so that Heraclitus himself (I mean if secret and unseen) might afford to smile at his comedies, they were so merry; and Democritus scarce forbear to sigh at his tragedies, they were so mournful.

"He was an eminent instance of the truth of that rule, *Poeta non fit, sed nascitur*, (one is not made but born a poet.) Indeed his learning was very little; so that, as Cornish diamonds are not polished by any lapidary, but are pointed and smoothed even as they are taken out of the earth, so Nature itself was all the art which was used upon him.

"Many were the wit-combats betwixt him and Ben Jonson; which two I behold like a Spanish great galleon and an English man-of-war. Master Jonson, like the former

was built far higher in learning; solid, but slow, in his performances: Shakespeare, with the English man-of-war, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his wit and invention."

Of these wit-combats, no relics worthy of much credit have survived, though divers things have from time to time been given out as specimens.[1] Probably the reputation of the parties for wit has caused many old jokes to be passed off in their names. And indeed, in the best flashes of extempore wit, so much of the effect depends on the character and manner of the speaker, that the matter will scarce bear repeating. We will close the subject and the Chapter with a part of Herrick's "Ode for Ben Jonson," published in 1648:

"Ah Ben!
Say how, or when,
Shall we thy guests
Meet at those lyric feasts,
Made at the Sun,
The Dog, the Triple Tun?
Where we such clusters had,
As made us nobly wild, not mad;
And yet each verse of thine
Outdid the meat, outdid the frolic wine."

[1] We subjoin two or three of these "specimens," just for a taste. The point of the first is explained in that *lattin* was a metallic compound somewhat resembling tin. See The Merry Wives of Windsor, Act i. sc. 1, note 19.

Shakespeare was God-father to one of Ben Jonson's children; and after the christening, being in a deep study, Jonson came to cheer him up, and asked him why he was so melancholy. — "No faith, Ben," says he, "not I; but I have been considering a great while what should be the fittest gift for me to bestow upon my God-child, and I have resolved at last." — "I pr'ythee, what?" says he. "I' faith, Ben, I'll e'en give him a dozen Latin spoons, and thou shalt translate them."

Verses by Ben Jonson and Shakespeare occasioned by the motto to the Globe theatre — *Totus mundus agit histrionem:*

Jonson. If but stage-actors all the world displays,
Where shall we find spectators of their plays?

CHAPTER V.

SHAKESPEARE IN RETIREMENT. — HIS DEATH. — HIS WILL.

THE Poet retained his interest in theatricals, and spent much, perhaps the most, of his time in London, for several years after ceasing to be an actor. The Rev. John Ward, who became vicar of Stratford-on-Avon in 1662, tells us, in a passage to be quoted more fully hereafter, that Shakespeare "frequented the plays all his younger time, but in his elder days lived at Stratford, and supplied the stage with two plays every year." That the vicar's information was in all points literally correct, is not at all likely; but there can be no doubt that Shakespeare continued to write for the stage after his retirement from it; and that, though for some years spending a large part of his time in the metropolis, he nevertheless "*lived* at Stratford."

Our previous reckonings have left eight of his plays to be set down as the dramatic fruits of his retirement. Of these, Macbeth was probably written in 1605 or 1606, though we have no certain notice of it till April, 1610, when Forman saw it performed at the Globe. An entry at the Stationers' ascertains that King Lear was acted before the King at Whitehall on the 26th of December, 1606. That mighty

Shakespeare. Little, or much of what we see, we do;
We are both actors and spectators too.

Ben Jonson and Shakespeare were once at a tavern-club where there were several lords from the Court, who came to hear their wit and conversation. Shakespeare call'd upon Ben Jonson to give a toast; he nam'd that lord's wife, who sat near him: the nobleman demanded why he nam'd her. "Why not?" replied the Poet; "she has the qualifications of a toast, being both brown and dry:" which answer made them all laugh, his lordship having been obliged to marry her against his inclinations.

drama was then, most likely, fresh from the Poet's hand. Three editions of it were made, evidently without the author's consent, in 1608; and the manner in which his name was printed shows that his reputation was still on the increase. The first probable information that we have of Antony and Cleopatra is by an entry at the Stationers' in May, 1608. The texture of the workmanship is such as to infer that this wonderful play was then in its first transports of success. We learn from Forman's Diary, that Cymbeline was performed some time between April, 1610, and May, 1611, the precise date not being given. The same Diary notes the performance of The Winter's Tale on the 15th of May, 1611; while the accounts of the Master of the Revels show that The Tempest and The Winter's Tale were acted at Whitehall by "the King's players," on the 1st and 5th of November, 1611. King Henry VIII. is not heard of till the burning of the Globe theatre, June 29th, 1613, when it is spoken of as "a new play." The only remaining one is Coriolanus, which is not heard of at all till after the Poet's death: nor has the play itself any allusions whereon to ground a probable inference or argument as to when it was written; though we have little doubt that it grew into being not far from the same time as King Henry VIII.; whether before or after, we cannot even conjecture.

Besides these eight plays written within the period in question, it is highly probable that several of the others were revised. Troilus and Cressida went through two editions in 1609, and in an address prefixed to the first of them the publisher as good as acknowledges the copy to have been stolen. He also calls it "a new play never stal'd with the stage;" but as he pretty much owns himself a thief, or at least a partaker in the fruits of theft; and as a "Troilus and Cressida, as it is acted by my Lord Chamberlain's men," was entered at the Stationers' in February, 1603; the probability is, that he either said what he knew to be false, or else that the play had then been newly rewritten. Pericles,

also, was printed in 1609, having been entered at the Stationers' along with Antony and Cleopatra, in May, 1608. That some parts of this play were rewritten at or about that time, is hardly questionable. Nor can we easily believe that the Poet could have put into Othello all the power it now has, so early as 1602. The same year, also, the Sonnets, for the first time, appeared in print. These, we have no doubt, were written at widely different times, and without any continuity of purpose or occasion; some of them, indeed, as expressions of personal feeling, but most of them merely as exercises of fancy or specimens of art. All these points are but touched here, being dwelt upon at length in our several Introductions.

It would seem, that after this time the Poet's reputation did not mount any higher during his life. A new generation of dramatists was then rising into favour, who, with some excellences derived from him, united gross vices of their own, which, however, were well adapted to captivate the popular taste. Moreover, King James himself, notwithstanding his liberality of patronage, was essentially a man of loose morals and low tastes; and it can scarce be doubted that his taking so much to Shakespeare at first grew more from the public voice than from his own preference. Before the Poet's death, we may trace the beginnings of that corruption which, rather stimulated than discouraged by puritan bigotry and fanaticism, reached its height some seventy years later; though its course was for a while arrested by the influence and example of that truly royal gentleman and scholar, King Charles the First, who, whatever else may be said of him, was unquestionably a man of as high and elegant tastes in literature and art, as England could boast of in his time. His mind had taken its first and deepest impressions from that older school, and the good seed had been sown in a pure and generous soil.

The next that we hear of Shakespeare as having a hand in stage-affairs, is in connection with an attempt to dislodge

the Blackfriars theatre. The London authorities had always been hostile to that establishment, which was but a little over the acknowledged line of their jurisdiction. It seems they had applied to Sir Henry Montague, then Attorney-General, who sustained their claim of jurisdiction in that precinct. The question appears to have come in some shape before Lord Chancellor Ellesmere, who required proofs of their right; but, such proof as they brought being deemed insufficient by the highest judicial authority, the case went against them. Unable to oust the concern by legal means, the city authorities, it appears, then undertook to buy it up. With a view to this purchase, an estimate was drafted of the several interests held in the establishment; which draft, or a copy of it, has lately been found among the Ellesmere papers.

From this document it appears that the whole property, besides the freehold and furnishings, was divided into twenty shares, each of which was alleged to yield an annual profit of £33 6*s.* 8*d.* Reckoning these profits at seven years' purchase, they made the value of each share £233 6*s.* 8*d.* Burbage owned the freehold, which he rated at £1000, and four shares; the whole amounting to £1933 6*s.* 8*d.* Shakespeare held the wardrobe and furniture, which he rated at £500, and four shares; £1433 6*s.* 8*d.*: Fletcher, three shares; £700: Heminge and Condell, two shares each; £933 6*s.* 8*d.*: Taylor and Lowin, each a share and a half; £700: four others, each half a share; £466 13*s.* 4*d.*: in all, £6166 13*s.* 4*d.* The estimate concludes thus: "Moreover, the hired men of the company demand some recompence for their great loss, and the widows and orphans of players, who are paid by the sharers at divers rates and proportions; so as in the whole it will cost the Lord Mayor and the citizens at least £7000."

In connection with this attempt, we have another most interesting paper, likewise found not long since in the Ellesmere collection. It purports to be a transcript of a letter

written by the Earl of Southampton to some nobleman, in behalf of the players interested in the Blackfriars, generally, and of Shakespeare and Burbage in particular. Mr. Collier, to whom we owe the discovery of it, remarks upon it as follows: "We may conclude that the original was not addressed to Lord Ellesmere, or it would have been found in the depository of his papers, and not merely a transcript of it; but a copy may have been furnished to the Lord Chancellor, in order to give him some information respecting the characters of the parties upon whose cause he was called upon to decide. That it was not sent to him by Lord Southampton, who probably was acquainted with him, may afford a proof of the delicacy of the Earl's mind, who would not seem directly to interpose while a question of the sort was pending before a judge." The paper is without date, but the contents preclude any doubt as to the occasion which elicited it. We subjoin it in full, merely adding that it has *Copia vera* written at the bottom:[1]

"My very honoured Lord: The many good offices I have received at your Lordships' hands, which ought to make me backward in asking further favours, only imboldeneth me to require more in the same kind. Your Lordship will be warned how hereafter you grant any suit, seeing it draweth on more and greater demands.

"This which now presseth is to request your Lordship, in all you can, to be good to the poor players of the Blackfriars, who call themselves by authority the servants of his Majesty, and ask for the protection of their most gracious master and sovereign in this the time of their trouble. They

[1] Mr. Knight seems to think it strange that a *copia vera* should want date and signature, but there is nothing very remarkable in such a circumstance. In the Library of the Society of Antiquaries, No. 201, Art. 3, is preserved "a copye of the comyssion of sewers in the countye of Kent," marked as *vera copia*, and, singularly enough, written apparently by the same hand that copied the letter of H. S.— HALLIWELL.

are threatened by the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London, never friendly to their calling, with the destruction of their means of livelihood, by the pulling down of their play house, which is a private theatre, and hath never given occasion of anger by any disorders.

"These bearers are two of the chief of the company; one of them by name Richard Burbage, who humbly sueth for your Lordship's kind help; for that he is a man famous as our English Roscius; one who fitteth the action to the word, and the word to the action, most admirably. By the exercise of his quality, industry, and good behaviour, he hath become possessed of the Blackfriars play-house, which hath been employed for plays sithence it was builded by his father, now near fifty years agone.

"The other is a man no whit less deserving favour, and my especial friend; till of late an actor of good account in the company, now a sharer in the same, and writer of some of our best English plays, which, as your Lordship knoweth, were most singularly liked of Queen Elizabeth, when the company was called upon to perform before her Majesty at Court, at Christmas and Shrovetide. His most gracious Majesty King James, also, since his coming to the crown, hath extended his royal favour to the company in divers ways and at sundry times. This other hath to name William Shakespeare; and they are both of one county, and indeed almost of one town: both are right famous in their qualities, though it longeth not of your Lordship's gravity and wisdom to resort unto the places where they are wont to delight the public ear. Their trust and suit now is, not to be molested in their way of life, whereby they maintain themselves and their wives and families, (being both married and of good reputation,) as well as the widows and orphans of some of their dead fellows.[2]

"Your Lordship's most bounden at command,

'Copia vera. H. S."

M Hunter has laboured strenuously to impugn not only

We have seen that in the estimate of the Blackfriars property each share was reckoned worth £33 6*s.* 8*d.* a year. As Shakespeare had four shares, these would give him an annual income of £133 6*s.* 8*d.* To this Mr. Collier adds £50 a year for the use of the wardrobe and furniture; making £183 6*s.* 8*d.* It is altogether likely that the Poet held at least an equal interest in the Globe; for it appears by a paper found at Dulwich College, that in April, 1609, "Mr. Shakespeare" was assessed six-pence a week towards the relief of the poor in Southwark. This was the largest sum paid by any on the list: Henslowe and Alleyn were rated at the same; while Lowin, another of the Globe players, was rated at two-pence a week. It is not certain, indeed, but this assessment of the Poet may have been for other property in that quarter; but there are very strong grounds for thinking that it was for his interest in the Globe: for he was

this, but the other Shakespeare papers in the Ellesmere collection. On the other hand, Mr. Halliwell, in his Life of the Poet, vindicates them, gives a fac-simile of that part of the Southampton letter which relates to Shakespeare, and avows the belief that it "will suffice to convince any one acquainted with such matters, that it is a genuine manuscript of the period." He adds the following: "No forgery of so long a document could present so perfect a continuity of design; yet it is right to state that grave doubts have been thrown on its authenticity. It is of importance to decide upon the character of this paper, for on the degree of credit we may give to it depends the value of the other manuscripts relating to Shakespeare in the same collection; and it would be satisfactory were Mr. Collier to furnish the public with fac-simile copies of all of them. At the same time, it must be admitted, in fairness to Mr. Collier, that, when the doubt of their authenticity was raised, he produced the letter of H. S., the one most severely attacked, before a council of the Shakespeare Society, and several competent judges, including Mr. Wright, fully concurred in believing it to be genuine. Mr. Hunter has systematically argued against the authority of all the Shakespearian documents found by Mr. Collier in Lord Ellesmere's collection; but how much reliance is to be placed on his conclusions, may be inferred from the fact, that the paper of the spuriousness of which he is most positive is preserved, not in that nobleman's library, but in the archives of the city of London, enrolled in books unquestionably authentic. I refer to the paper relating to Kemp and Armin."

unquestionably a leading sharer in that theatre; moreover, the register of the parish shows that in 1601 the churchwardens were "to talk with the players" in regard to making contributions for that purpose; and when the Fortune was about to be built, in 1600, the inhabitants of Cripplegate petitioned the Privy Council in favour of the undertaking, one of their reasons being, that "the erectors were contented to give a very liberal portion of money weekly towards the relief of the poor." To all which must be added that, except the Globe, we do not elsewhere hear of any other property owned by Shakespeare at that time in the parish of St. Saviour.

Allowing the assessment to be on account of the theatre, this would infer his interest in that concern to be pretty large. So that we may set it down as certainly not less than that in the Blackfriars, which would make his annual income to be £366 13*s.* 4*d.* Mr. Collier says, — "Taking every known source of emolument into view, we consider £400 a year the very lowest amount at which his income can be reckoned in 1608." This would be, for all practical purposes, nearly or quite as good as $10,000 in our time.

The justness of this estimate is strongly approved by another discovery lately made in the State-paper Office. On the 19th of March, 1619, John Chamberlaine wrote to Sir Dudley Carlton, then Ambassador at the Hague. In his letter, after mentioning the death of Queen Anne, he adds the following: "The funeral is put off to the 29th of the next month, to the great hindrance of our players, which are forbidden to play so long as her body is above ground: one special man among them, Burbage, is lately dead, and hath left, they say, better than £300 land." The funeral of Burbage took place at St. Leonard's, Shoreditch, on the 16th of March, 1619. In his will, made the 15th, he said nothing about the amount of his wealth, but merely left his wife Winifred his sole executrix. Mr. Collier thinks "there can be no doubt that the correspondent of Sir Dudley Carlton

was correct in his information, and that Burbage died worth 'better than' £300 a year in land, besides his 'goods and chattels;' and we have every reason to suppose that Shakespeare was in quite as good if not better circumstances."

Further evidence of the point is furnished by a curious passage from a tract entitled "Ratsey's Ghost, or the Second Part of his mad Pranks and Robberies." The tract was printed about 1606, and the allusion is clearly to Shakespeare or Burbage, or, more likely, both. Ratsey was a noted highwayman, executed in 1605, who is here represented as paying some strolling players £2 for acting before him, then overtaking them on the road, and robbing them of it; whereupon he gives them advice:

"And for you, sirrah, says he to the chiefest of them, thou hast a good presence upon a stage; methinks, thou darkenest thy merit by playing in the country: get thee to London, for, if one man were dead, they will have much need of such as thou art. There would be none, in my opinion, fitter than thyself to play his parts: my conceit is such of thee, that I durst all the money in my purse on thy head, to play Hamlet with him for a wager. There thou shalt learn to be frugal, (for players were never so thrifty as they are now about London,) and to feed upon all men; to let none feed upon thee; to make thy hand a stranger to thy pocket, thy heart slow to perform thy tongue's promise; and, when thou feelest thy purse well lined, buy thee some place of lordship in the country; that, growing weary of playing, thy money may there bring thee to dignity and reputation: then thou needest care for no man; no, not for them that before made thee proud with speaking their words on the stage. — Sir, I thank you, quoth the player, for this good counsel: I promise you, I will make use of it; for I have heard indeed of some that have gone to London very meanly, and have come in time to be exceeding wealthy."

We have already seen that soon after the accession of James the choir-boys of the Chapel became "the Children

of the Queen's Revels." It seems that for some years they had been accustomed to act as a company of players at the Blackfriars; probably in the summer only, when the owners of that theatre were acting at the Globe. The last notice we have of our Poet as connected with theatrical matters, is in a royal warrant appointing and authorising "Robert Daborne, William Shakespeare, Nathaniel Field, and Edward Kirkham, from time to time to provide and bring up a convenient number of children, and them to instruct and exercise in the quality of playing tragedies, comedies, &c., by the name of the Children of the Revels to the Queen, within the Blackfriars, in our city of London, or elsewhere within our realm of England." This warrant is dated January 4th, 1610, and at the foot of it is written "stayed;" which infers that it was not immediately carried into effect; probably, at least as regards Shakespeare, it never was. Why the appointment was designed to him, we have no knowledge; possibly he may have sought it, with a view to some profitable employment when business or inclination detained him in London.

A large and credible tradition assures that the Poet made, for that time, frequent journeys between London and Stratford, and that the Crown Inn at Oxford was his usual lodging-place. This tavern was then kept by John Davenant, father of Sir William. Our oldest authority in the matter is Anthony Wood, who, speaking of Sir William Davenant, has the following: "His mother was a very beautiful woman, of a good wit and conversation, in which she was imitated by none of her children but this William. The father, who was a very grave and discreet citizen, yet an admirer and lover of plays and play-makers, especially Shakespeare, who frequented his house in his journeys between Warwickshire and London, was of a melancholic disposition, and was seldom or never seen to laugh, in which he was imitated by none of his children but by Robert his eldest son, afterwards fellow of St. John's College, and a venerable doctor of divinity."

Sir William Davenant was born in 1606. Aubrey repeats the story just quoted, and, as might be expected, adds some rather significant embellishments, to the effect that Shakespeare was believed to be the father of Sir William, and that Sir William encouraged this belief, as preferring the credit of such a descent to that of an humbler but honest pedigree. Oldys gives the tale with yet other variations, thus: "If tradition may be trusted, Shakespeare often baited at the Crown Inn or Tavern in Oxford, in his journeys to and from London. The landlady was a woman of great beauty and sprightly wit, and her husband, Mr. John Davenant, afterwards mayor of that city, a grave melancholy man; who, as well as his wife, used much to delight in Shakespeare's pleasant company. Their son, young Will Davenant, afterwards Sir William, was then a little school-boy in the town, of about seven or eight years old, and so fond also of Shakespeare, that whenever he heard of his arrival he would fly from school to see him. One day, an old townsman, observing the boy running homeward almost out of breath, asked him whither he was posting in that heat and hurry. He answered, to see his God-father, Shakespeare. There's a good boy, said the other; but have a care that you don't take God's name in vain. This story Mr. Pope told me at the Earl of Oxford's table, upon occasion of some discourse which arose about Shakespeare's monument then newly erected in Westminster Abbey; and he quoted Mr. Betterton the player for his authority. I answered, that I thought such a story might have enriched the variety of those choice fruits of observations he has presented us in his preface to the edition he had published of our Poet's works. He replied, there might be in the garden of mankind such plants as would seem to pride themselves more in a regular production of their own native fruits, than in having the repute of bearing a richer kind by grafting; and this was the reason he omitted it."

Warton, also, tells us "it was always a constant tradition

in Oxford, that Shakespeare was the father of Davenant the poet." Nevertheless, we do not attach any credit to the story. The anecdote is often met with, under different names, in old jest-books; and the probability is, that in this case the beauty and sprightliness of the mother, the gravity and discreetness of the father, and the pleasure they both took in the Poet's conversation, caused them to be fixed upon for giving the tale a "local habitation and a name."[3]

Hitherto, the Poet has been overtaken in business transactions rather oftener than in poetical. His latter years furnish about the usual proportion of similar notices. The Stratford records show that in March, 1610, he instituted a legal process against John Addenbrook for the recovery of a small debt. Return being made that Addenbrook was not to be found within the borough, Shakespeare, in June following, proceeded against Thomas Horneby, who had become bail for him, and it is to be hoped he got his money.

We have seen that in May, 1602, Shakespeare purchased of the Combes a hundred and seven acres of arable land in Old Stratford. In the spring of 1611 a fine was levied on this property, and it thereby appears that twenty acres of pasture had been added to the original purchase. At what time the addition was made, is nowhere stated. The fine states the purchase money as £100, which Halliwell thinks to be a mere legal fiction.

This seems a proper occasion for noticing an extempore epitaph which the Poet is alleged to have made on John Combe. Rowe states the occasion of these satirical verses, and also gives a copy of them, as they had come down to him by tradition. As the whole may be seen in our Introduction,

[3] A boy, whose mother was noted to be one not overloden with honesty, went to seeke his godfather, and, enquiring for him, quoth one to him, who is thy godfather? The boy replied, his name is goodman Digland the gardiner. Oh, said the man, if he be thy godfather, he is at the next alehouse; but I feare thou takest God's name in vain. — *Taylor's Workes*. 1630.

it need not be repeated here. It seems but right, however, to add Aubrey's version of the matter, which, as the reader may see, differs a good deal from Rowe's, and differs for the worse: "One time, as Shakespeare was at the tavern at Stratford, one Combes, an old rich usurer, was to be buried, he makes there this extemporary epitaph:

> 'Ten in the hundred the devil allows,
> But Combes will have twelve he swears and vows;
> If any one asks who lies in this tomb,
> Ho! quoth the devil, 'tis my John a Combe!'"

Here, again, it appears that an old poor conceit has been fathered on the Poet; Mr. Halliwell having shown that the sorry stuff recorded by Aubrey and Rowe is often found, under slightly-varied forms, in epigrammatical collections of that time. Still the account given by Aubrey and Rowe is probably so far right, that Shakespeare did make some verses on Combe, though not those ascribed to him. For in 1634 three men, who describe themselves as "a captain, a lieutenant, and an ancient, all three of the military company in Norwich," took a journey through that part of England, and made notes of what they saw: the manuscript is preserved in the Lansdown collection; and among the things "worth observing" which they saw at Stratford, are mentioned "a neat monument of that famous English poet, Mr. William Shakespeare, who was born here; and one of an old gentleman, a bachelor, Mr. Combe, *upon whose name* the said Poet did merrily fan up some witty and facetious verses which time would not give us leave to sack up." We have cause to regret their lack of time; though not so much that the verses which Shakespeare did "fan up" might have been rescued from loss, as that his name might have been rescued from those which he did not. Mr. Hunter is probably right in supposing that the Poet's verses on the old gentleman's "name" were "in the punning style of the times, allusive to the double sense of the word *Combe*, as the name of a person, and also of a certain measure of

corn." It is proper to add, that tradition has run divers variations on the matter of the Combe epitaph, which are too stupid to be worth copying, even if they were true. According to one of these variations, the Poet wrote a second epitaph on John Combe, after his death, in which he tried to make amends for the scurrility of the first. Another variation makes him to have written an epitaph also on Thomas Combe, and this still more scurrilous than the former.

Thomas Combe was the nephew of John; and it is worth noting that in both cases the satire is said to have stung the men so severely that they never forgave it. So that the whole scandal is sufficiently disposed of by the fact that John Combe, at his death, in 1614, left a legacy of £5 "to Mr. William Shakespeare;" and that when the latter died he bequeathed to Mr. Thomas Combe his sword; which shows them to have died, as they had doubtless lived, on friendly terms. As to the rest, John Combe appears by his will, which is printed at length by Halliwell, to have been a very upright and fair man: his wealth was indeed pretty large; but he left to the poor of Stratford £20, to those of Warwick £5, and to those of Alcester £5; besides £100 to be held in trust, and lent out on a small interest, which was also for "the use of the alms folks," to "fifteen poor or young tradesmen, occupiers, or handicraftsmen dwelling within the borough of Stratford." He also made provision for "a convenient tomb, of the value of three-score pounds." The monument still remains, and on it are inscribed his benefactions, which, though well-guarded, as they ought to be, were decidedly handsome, not to say generous. His residence was close by New Place, and there is no cause why his name should be coupled with the Poet's but in terms of respect.

About the time we are now upon, the Stratford people seem to have been a good deal interested in "a bill in Parliament for the better repair of the highways, and amending divers defects in the statutes already made:" funds were

"collected towards the charge of prosecuting the bill;" and "Mr. William Shakespeare" is one of the names found in a list of donations for that purpose, dated "Wednesday the 11th of September, 1611."

The probability is that after this time Shakespeare saw but little of the metropolis. Rowe tells us "the latter part of his life was spent, as all men of sense will wish theirs may be, in ease, retirement, and the conversation of his friends." Still he was, like other men, not without his vexations. The exact date does not appear, but about the end of 1612 he was involved in a chancery suit respecting the tithes he had bought in 1605. The plaintiffs in the case are described as "Richard Lane, of Alveston, Esquire, Thomas Greene, of Stratford-upon-Avon, Esquire, and William Shakespeare, of Stratford-upon-Avon, gentleman." It seems that there was a reserved rent on the lease of the tithes, and that, some of the lessees refusing to pay their shares of this rent, a greater proportion than was right fell upon Lane, Greene, and Shakespeare; who thereupon filed a bill before Lord Chancellor Ellesmere, that the other lessees might be compelled to due payment. The issue of the suit is not known; but the draft of the bill is valuable as showing the Poet's exact income from the tithes: it was £60 a year.

The last pecuniary transaction of his that has come to light was the purchase of a house with a small piece of ground attached to it, in the neighbourhood of the Blackfriars theatre. The indenture of conveyance, preserved in the archives of the London corporation, describes the property as "abutting upon a street leading down to Puddle-wharf on the east part, right against the King's Majesty's Wardrobe," and the vendor as "Henry Walker, citizen and minstrel, of London." It is dated March 10th, 1613, and bears the Poet's signature, which shows that he was in London at the time. The purchase-money was £140, of which £80 were paid down, and the premises mortgaged for the remainder, the mortgage to run till the 29th of September

following. Why the purchase was made, does not appear, but, as John Heminge, William Johnson, and John Jackson were parties to the transaction, Mr. Collier aptly conjectures that the Poet advanced the £80 to them, expecting they would refund it before the expiration of the mortgage; but as they did not do so, he paid the other £60, and the property remained his.

On the 29th of June, the same year, the Globe theatre was burnt down, and certain contemporary notices of the event, which are quoted in our Introduction to the play, ascertain that King Henry VIII. was in performance at the time. As the conflagration was very rapid, giving the people barely time to save themselves, it is likely that many of the Poet's manuscripts perished, and perhaps some, of which no copies were left. The theatre was soon rebuilt, and, as Stowe informs us, "at the great charge of King James, and many noblemen and others." The Poet is not traced as having any thing to do with the rebuilding of the establishment; but, if he suffered no loss himself, we may be sure that he took a lively interest in the losses of his fellows, and was forward to lend them a helping hand.

The summer following, he had a narrow escape from a similar calamity at home. On the 9th of July, 1614, Stratford was devastated by fire, to such an extent that the people made an appeal to the nation for relief. At the instance of various gentlemen of the neighbourhood, the King issued a brief in May, 1615, authorizing collections to be made in the churches for the rebuilding of the town, and alleging that fifty-four dwelling-houses had been destroyed, besides much other property, amounting in all to upwards of £8000. The result of the appeal is not known; nor is it known what influence the Poet may have used towards procuring the royal brief. With such friends as Southampton and Pembroke among the nobility, added to his own high position, he could not want means of acting with effect on the Court, and probably with the more effect, for being himself not seen.

The fall of 1614 finds Shakespeare in London using his influence effectually in the cause of his fellow-citizens. It seems that several persons had set on foot a project for inclosing certain commons near Stratford, which the public were interested to keep open. The Poet had private reasons, also, for bestirring himself in the matter, as the projected inclosure was likely to affect his interest in the lease of the tithes. A legal instrument, dated October 28th, 1614, is extant, whereby William Replingham binds himself to indemnify William Shakespeare and Thomas Greene for any loss which they, in the judgment of certain referees, may sustain in respect of the yearly value of the tithes they jointly or severally hold, "by reason of any enclosure or decay of tillage there meant or intended."

A few days after, Greene is found in London moving in the business as clerk of the Stratford corporation. In some notes of his made at the time, we have the following, dated November 17th, 1614: "My cousin Shakespeare coming yesterday to town, I went to see him, how he did. He told me that they assured him they meant to inclose no further than to Gospel-bush, and so up straight (leaving out part of the dingles to the field) to the gate in Clopton hedge, and take in Salisbury's piece; and that they mean in April to survey the land, and then to give satisfaction, and not before; and he and Mr. Hall say they think there will be nothing done at all."

Greene returned to Stratford soon after, and his notes, which he continued to make, inform us that the corporation had a meeting on the 23d of December, and sent letters to Shakespeare and Mainwaring: "Letters written, one to Mr. Mainwaring, another to Mr. Shakespeare, with almost all the company's hands to either. I also writ myself to my cousin Shakespeare the copies of all our acts, and then also a note of the inconveniences that would happen by the inclosure." The letters to Shakespeare are lost: in that to Mainwaring, which is preserved, the corporation urged in

strong terms the damage Stratford would suffer by the projected inclosure, and also the heavy loss the people had lately sustained by fire. Mr. Arthur Mainwaring was a person in the domestic service of Lord Chancellor Ellesmere, which explains why he was written to in the matter. It is pretty clear from these slight notices, that the corporation left the care of their interests very much to Shakespeare, who had approved himself a good hand at bringing things to pass in actual life, as well as in ideal. The result was, an order from Court not only forbidding the inclosure to proceed, but peremptorily commanding that some steps already taken should be forthwith retraced.

This Thomas Greene was an attorney of Stratford. The origin and degree of his relationship to the Poet are not known. The parish register of Stratford records the burial of "Thomas Greene, *alias* Shakespeare," on the 6th of March, 1590. Probably enough, the attorney of 1614 may have been his son; and the relationship between the two families may furnish the true key to that remarkable acquaintance which the Poet shows with the mysteries of the law.

Of this wonderful being, in whom all sorts of men both actual and possible seem to have been mysteriously wrapped up, nothing further is known till his death. As evidence how early began that profound homage to his genius, which was to follow him as one who "was not of an age, but for all time," we may worthily quote some verses of a poem that first appeared in 1614, entitled The Ghost of Richard the Third:

> "To him that imp'd my fame with Clio's quill;
> Whose magic rais'd me from Oblivion's den;
> That writ my story on the Muses' hill,
> And with my actions dignified his pen;
> He that from Helicon sends many a rill,
> Whose nectar'd veins are drunk by thirsty men
> Crown'd be his style with fame, his head with bayes,
> And none detract, but gratulate his praise

"Yet, if his scenes have not engross'd all grace
The much-fam'd action could extend on stage;
If Time to Memory have left a place
For me to fill, t'inform this ignorant age;
To that intent I show my horrid face,
Impress'd with fear and characters of rage:
Nor wits nor chronicles could e'er contain
The hell-deep reaches of my soundless brain."

The poem is divided into three parts, severally entitled The Character, The Legend, and The Tragedy; and these stanzas, wherein Richard is of course represented as telling his own story, are at the opening of the second part. The author gives only his initials, C. B., which are commonly thought to stand for Charles Best; though the poem is much better than any thing else that came from Best. Be that as it may, C. B. was certainly an author highly distinguished in his time, as appears by the commendatory poems upon him from such hands as Jonson, Chapman, Browne, and Wither.

Tradition makes the Poet to have been something of an epitaph-writer in his latter years. Several specimens in this line are attributed to him, and one of them stands on such testimony that we cannot well refuse it. This is an epitaph on the tomb of Sir Thomas Stanley, in Tonge church, who died in 1576. Dugdale, in his collection of monumental inscriptions for the county of Salop, taken in 1663, gives a copy of it, and states that "the following verses were made by William Shakespeare, the late famous tragedian:"

'WRITTEN UPON THE EAST END OF THE TOMB.

'Ask who lies here, but do not weep;
He is not dead, he doth but sleep:
This stony register is for his bones;
His fame is more perpetual than these stones;
And his own goodness, with himself being gone,
Shall live when earthly monument is none.'

"WRITTEN ON THE WEST END THEREOF

'Not monumental stone preserves our fame,
Nor sky-aspiring pyramids our name.

> The memory of him for whom this stands
> Shall outlive marble and defacers' hands;
> When all to time's consumption shall be given,
> Stanley, for whom this stands, shall stand in heaven.'"

We cannot say that we think these lines not unworthy of the Poet: we would gladly have omitted them as spurious, but that the authority seems too strong to be so dealt with. But because Shakespeare could write Hamlet, it does not therefore follow that he could achieve any thing very superb when his faculties were "cribb'd and cabin'd in" between the terms of an epitaph. As for the others, they are still less worthy of him, and, besides, have no such authority to force their reception.

When, or to whom, the Poet parted with his theatrical interests, we have no knowledge: that he did part with them, may be probably, though not necessarily, concluded from his not mentioning them in his will; and, from the large productiveness of such investments at that time, he would of course have no difficulty in finding purchasers enough. We have given Mr. Collier's estimate of his probable income after retiring from the stage: it appears certainly low enough. This brings us to the passage promised some pages back from Ward's Diary. A note at the end of the volume informs us that "this book was begun February 14, 1661, and finished April 25, 1663, at Mr. Brooks' house in Stratford-upon-Avon." The passage in question is as follows:

"Shakespeare had but two daughters, one whereof Mr. Hall, the physician, married, and by her had one daughter, to wit, the Lady Barnard of Abingdon. — I have heard that Mr. Shakespeare was a natural wit, without any art at all. He frequented the plays all his younger time, but in his elder days liv'd at Stratford, and supplied the stage with two plays every year; and for that had an allowance so large, that he spent at the rate of £1000 a year, as I have heard. — Shakespeare, Drayton, and Ben Jonson had a merry meeting, and, it seems, drank too hard; for Shakespeare

died of a fever there contracted. — Remember to peruse Shakespeare's plays, and be versed in them, that I may not be ignorant in that matter."

The only point in this, to be noticed now, is the Poet's alleged expenditure. The honest and cautious vicar did well, to add to his statement "as I have heard." That Shakespeare kept up a liberal, not to say sumptuous, establishment, and was fond of entertaining his neighbours, and still more his old associates, after a generous fashion, we can well believe. But that he had £1000 a year to spend, or would have spent it if he had, is not credible. Such a sum at that time would have gone as far, practically, as the salary of our American President can go now!

A few particulars respecting the Poet's family will bring us to the closing passage of his life. We have already seen that his father died in September, 1601, and his mother just about seven years after. There seems little room for doubt, that their latter years were passed under his roof. Joan, his only surviving sister, born in April, 1569, was married to William Hart, of Stratford, a hatter. The marriage probably took place out of Stratford, as there is no note of it in the register. Their first child was christened William, August 28th, 1600. Three other children, Mary, Thomas, and Michael, were born to them, respectively, in 1603, 1605, and 1608. Mary Hart died in December, 1607, and her father was buried April 17th, 1616, a few days before the Poet. The three surviving children were kindly remembered in their uncle's will, as was also their mother.

We have seen that Gilbert lived at Stratford, and appears to have taken some charge of the Poet's home affairs. It is not known whether he were married; but the Stratford register enters the burial, February 3d, 1612, of "Gilbert Shakespeare, *adolescens*;" who may have been his son. We have noticed elsewhere a tradition of one of the Poet's brothers having lived to a great age. If the tradition be true, it must, as will presently appear, refer to Gilbert, who

was born in 1566. Richard, the next brother, born in 1574, was buried at Stratford February 4th, 1613. Nothing further is heard of him. It is tolerably certain that Edmund, the youngest brother, born in 1580, became a player. The register of St. Saviour's parish, in which the Globe theatre stood, records the burial of "Edmund Shakespeare, a player," on the 31st of December, 1607. In the low estate of his father's affairs, he had most likely followed his brother's fortune. Nothing more is known of him. — On the 16th of October, 1608, a little more than a month after the death of his mother, the Poet stood sponsor at the christening, in Stratford, of a boy named William Walker, who is also remembered in his will.

On the 5th of June, 1607, the Poet's eldest daughter, Susanna, then in her twenty-fifth year, was married to Mr. John Hall, of Stratford, styled "gentleman" in the register, but afterwards a practising physician of good standing. The February following, Shakespeare became a grandfather; Elizabeth, the first and only child of John and Susanna Hall, being baptized on the 17th of that month. It is supposed, and apparently with good reason, that Dr. Hall and his wife lived in the same house with the Poet; she was evidently deep in her father's heart; she is said to have had something of his genius and temper; the house was large enough for them all; nor are there wanting, as will be seen hereafter. signs of entire affection between Mrs. Hall and her mother. Add to all this the Poet's manifest fondness for children, and his gentle and affable disposition, and we have the elements of a happy family and a cheerful home, such as might well render a good-natured man impatient of the stage. Of the moral and religious spirit and tenour of domestic life at New Place, we are not allowed to know: at a later period, the Shakespeares seem to have been not a little distinguished for works of piety and charity. The chamberlain's accounts show the curious entry, in 1614, of 1*s.* 8*d.* "for one quart of sack and one quart of claret wine, given

to a preacher at the New Place." The worshipful corporation of Stratford seem to have been at this time rather addicted to puritanism, as they could not endure plays within their jurisdiction:[4] why they should thus have volunteered a part towards entertaining the preacher, if he were not minded like them, and why they should have suffered him to put up at New Place, if he were, are matters about which we can only speculate.

On the 10th of February, 1616, Shakespeare saw his youngest daughter, Judith, married to Thomas Quiney, of Stratford, a vintner and wine-merchant. He was a son of the Richard Quiney who requested from the Poet a loan of £30 in 1598, and who died in May, 1602, being at that time high bailiff of Stratford. From the way Shakespeare mentions his daughter's marriage-portion in his will, it is evident that he gave his sanction to the match. Which may be cited as arguing that he had not himself experienced any such evils, as some have been fond of alleging, from the woman being older than the man; for his daughter had four years the start of her husband; she being at the time of her marriage thirty-one, and he twenty-seven.

Shakespeare was now in the meridian of life. There was no special cause that we know of, why he might not have lived many years longer. It were vain to conjecture what he might have done, had more years been given him: possibly, instead of augmenting his legacy to us, he might have

[4] We have seen, in Chapter ii., note 2, that the corporation began to bear down hard upon such naughtiness in 1602. In 1612, they made a more stringent order, as follows: "The inconvenience of plaies beinge verie seriouslie considered of, with the unlawfullnes, and how contrarie the sufferance of them is againste the orders heretofore made, and againste the examples of other well-governed citties and burrowes, the companie heare are contented, and theie conclude, that the penaltie of x. *s.*, imposed in Mr. Bakers yeare for breakinge the order, shall from henceforth be x. *li.* upon the breakers of that order; and this to hold untill the nexte commen councell, and from thenceforth for ever, excepted that it be then finalli revoked and made voide."

recalled and suppressed more or less of what he had already written as our inheritance. For the last two or three years, he seems to have left his pen unused; as if, his own ends once achieved, he set no value on that mighty sceptre with which he since rules so large a portion of mankind. That the motives and ambitions of authorship had little to do in the generation of his works, is evident from the serene carelessness with which he left them to shift for themselves; tossing those wonderful treasures from him, as if he thought them good for nothing but to serve the hour. Still, to us in our ignorance, his life cannot but seem too short. For aught we know, Providence in its wisdom may have thought best not to allow the example of a man so gifted living to himself.

Be that as it may, WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE departed this life on the 23d of April, 1616.

Two days after, so much of him as could die was buried beneath the chancel of Stratford church. His burial took place on the day before the anniversary of his baptism; and it has been commonly believed that his death fell on the anniversary of his birth. If so, he had just entered his fifty-third year; but there is no good authority for the belief, save the then usual custom of baptizing three days after the birth.

As to the immediate cause or occasion of the Poet's death, we have no information beyond what has been quoted from Ward. Stratford seems to have been rather noted in those days for bad drainage. Garrick tells us that even in his time it was "the most dirty, unseemly, ill-paved, wretched looking town in all Britain." Epidemics were frequent there in the Poet's time; and not long after his death we hear, from Dr. Hall, of "the new fever," which "invaded many" of the Stratford people: he also mentions, though without stating the time, his having cured Michael Drayton, "an excellent poet," of a tertian ague. Perhaps Drayton was on a visit to his friend Shakespeare at the time; but, as he

also was a Warwickshire man, this cannot be inferred with certainty. The Poet's will was first dated the 25th of January, 1616, but afterward *March* was substituted for *January*. It appears also that his will must have been drawn up before the marriage of his daughter Judith, as he speaks of her only by her maiden name. It seems not unlikely that, being in January doubtfully ill, he may have prepared the document; then, finding himself getting better, he may have over-indulged in some festivity with his friends, which brought on a fatal relapse. The Poet, it is true, begins his will by stating that he makes it "in perfect health and memory:" this may have been mere matter of form, or such may have been really the case at the time of writing. But it would seem to have been far otherwise at the time of the execution; for several good judges have remarked that the Poet's signatures, of which there are three, in as many different places of the will, appear written with an infirm and unsteady hand, as if his energies were shattered by disease.

During his sickness, the Poet was most likely attended by his son-in-law. Dr. Hall was evidently a man of considerable science and skill in his profession. This appears from certain memoranda which he left, of cases that occurred in his practice. The notes were written in Latin, but were translated from his manuscript, and published by Jonas Cooke in 1657, with the title of "Select Observations on English Bodies." As Dr. Hall did not begin to make notes of his practice till 1617, he furnishes no information touching the Poet.

A copy of the will, as it has been given with great care by Mr. Halliwell from the original, may be found at the end of this Chapter; so that there is no need of presenting any analysis of its contents here. One item, however, must not pass unnoticed: "I give unto my wife the second best bed, with the furniture." As this is the only mention made of her, the circumstance was for a long time regarded as betraying a strange indifference, or something worse, on the

testator's part towards his wife. And on this has hung the main argument that the union was not a happy one. We owe to Mr. Knight an explanation of the matter; which is so simple and decisive, that we can only wonder it was not hit upon before. Shakespeare's property was mostly freehold; and in all this the widow had what is called right of dower fully secured to her by the ordinary operation of English law. As for "the second best bed," it was doubtless the very thing which a loving and beloved wife would be sure to prize above any other article of furniture in the establishment.

In some verses by Leonard Digges, prefixed to the folio of 1623, allusion is made to Shakespeare's "Stratford monument;" which shows that the monument had been placed in the church before that date. It represents the Poet with a cushion before him, a pen in his right hand, and his left resting on a scroll. "The bust," says Wivell, "is fixed under an arch, between two Corinthian columns of black marble, with gilded bases and capitals, supporting the entablature; above which, and surmounted by a death's-head, are carved his arms; on each side is a small figure in a sitting posture; one holding in his left hand a spade, and the other, whose eyes are closed, with an inverted torch in his left hand, the right resting upon a skull, as symbols of mortality." As originally coloured, the eyes were a light hazel, the hair auburn, the dress a scarlet doublet, and a loose black gown without sleeves thrown over it. In 1748, the colours were carefully restored; but in 1793, Malone, with strange taste, had the whole painted white by a common house-painter. Dugdale informs us that the monument was the work of Gerard Johnson, an eminent sculptor of that period. It was doubtless done at the instance and cost of Dr. Hall and his wife. A tablet below the bust has the following inscription:

"Judicio Pylum, genio Socratem, arte Maronem,
Terra tegit, populus mæret, Olympus habet.

Stay, Passenger, why goest thou by so fast?
Read, if thou canst, whom envious Death hath plac'd
Within this monument: Shakespeare, with whom
Quick nature died; whose name doth deck this Tomb
Far more than cost; sith all that he hath writ
Leaves living Art but page to serve his wit.

"Obiit Anno Domini 1616,
Ætatis 53, die 23 April."

As to the lines which tradition ascribes to the Poet as written for his own tomb-stone, there is very little likelihood that he had any thing to do with them. The earliest that we hear of them is in the letter, quoted in Chapter ii., note 14, written by Dowdall in 1693: "Near the wall where his monument is erected lieth a plain freestone, underneath which his body is buried, with this epitaph, made by himself a little before his death:

'Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbear
To dig the dust inclosed here:
Blest be the man that spares these stones,
And curs'd be he that moves my bones!'"

The writer adds, — "Not one, for fear of the curse above-said, dare touch his grave-stone, though his wife and daughters did earnestly desire to be laid in the same grave with him." Such is indeed the inscription on a flat stone covering the spot where the Poet's remains are supposed to lie; but there is no name, nor any thing whatever to identify the lines as written either by Shakespeare or for him.

The mortal remains of Anne Shakespeare were laid beside those of her husband, August 8th, 1623. A worthy memorial covers the spot, whereon we trace the fitting language of a daughter's love, paying a warm tribute to the religious character of her who was gone, and clearly inferring that she had "as much of virtue as could die." It is a brass plate set in a stone and inscribed as follows:

"Here lieth interred the body of Anne, wife of William Shakespeare, who departed this life the 6th day of August 1623, being of the age of 67 years.

"Ubera tu, mater, tu lac, vitamque dedisti,
Væ mihi! pro tanto munere saxa dabo.
Quam mallem amoveat lapidem bonus angel' ore,
Exeat ut Christi corpus imago tua:
Sed nil vota valent; venias cito, Christe, resurget
Clausa licet tumulo mater, et astra petit."

Another precious inscription in the chancel of Stratford church was partly erased many years ago to make room for one to Richard Watts, who died in 1707. Fortunately the lines had been preserved by Dugdale. Through the taste and liberality of the Rev. W. Harness, the original inscription has been recently restored, thus:

"Here lieth the body of Susanna, Wife to John Hall, Gent., the daughter of William Shakespeare, Gent. She deceased the 11th of July, Anno 1649, aged 66.

'Witty above her sex, but that's not all;
Wise to salvation was good Mistress Hall:
Something of Shakespeare was in that, but this
Wholly of Him with whom she's now in bliss.

"Then, passenger, hast ne'er a tear
To weep with her that wept for all?
That wept, yet set herself to cheer
Them up with comforts cordial.
Her love shall live, her mercy spread,
When thou hast ne'er a tear to shed."[b]

The first-born of Thomas and Judith Quiney was christened Shakespeare Quiney on the 23d of November, just

[b] Close beside this inscription is one to her husband, as follows: "Heere lyeth the body of John Hall, Gent. He married Susanna, the daughter and coheire of Will. Shakespeare, Gent. He deceased November 25, Anno 1635, aged 60.

"Hallius hic situs est, medica celeberrimus arte,
Expectans regni gaudia læta Dei.
Dignus erat meritis, qui Nestora vinceret annis,
In terris omnes. sed rapit æqua dies.
Ne tumulo quid desit, adest fidessima conjux,
Et vitæ comitem nunc quoque mortis habet."

The parish register has the following entry of burial: "1635. Nov 26. Johannes Hall, medicus peritissimus."

seven months after the death of his grandfather. He was buried May 8th, 1617. He was followed by two other children: Richard, baptized February 9th, 1618, and buried February 26th, 1639; and Thomas, baptized January 23d, 1620, and buried January 28th, 1639. Their mother was buried the 9th of February, 1662, having lived to the age of 77 years. The time of her husband's death is not known.

The Poet's grand-daughter, Elizabeth Hall, was married to Mr. Thomas Nash on the 26th of April, 1626, who died April 4th, 1647.[6] On the 5th of June, 1649, she was married again to Mr. John Barnard, who was knighted after the Restoration. Lady Barnard died childless in 1670, and was buried at Abingdon with the family of Sir John. After her decease, the nearest relatives of the Poet living were the descendants of his sister, Joan Hart. At the time of her brother's death, Mrs. Hart was living in one of his Stratford houses, which, with the appurtenances, was by his will secured to her use for life at a nominal rent of 12*d.* Her descendants, bearing the name of Hart, have continued down to our own time, but, it is said, "not in a position we can contemplate with satisfaction."

Much discussion has been had of late as to the right way of spelling the Poet's name. The few autographs of his that are extant do not enable us to decide precisely how he wrote his name, or rather they show that he had no one constant way of writing it. But the Venus and Adonis and The Rape of Lucrece were unquestionably published by his authority and under his superintendence, and in the dedications

[6] The inscription to him, also in the Stratford church, is as follows: "Heere resteth the Body of Thomas Nashe, Esq. He married Elizabeth, the daughter and heire of John Halle, Gent. He died Aprill 4, Anno 1647, aged 53.

"Fata manent omnes hunc non virtute carentem,
Ut neque divitiis abstulit atra dies;
Abstulit. at referet lux ultima: siste, viator,
Si peritura paras, per male parta peris'

of both these poems the name is printed "Shakespeare." The same is the case in all the quarto issues of his plays, where the author's name is given, with the single exception of Love's Labour's Lost, which has it "Shakespere;" and also in the original folio. And in much the greater number of these instances the name is printed with a hyphen, thus, "Shake-speare," as if on purpose that there might be no mistaking it. All which, surely, is, or ought to be, decisive as to how the Poet willed his name to be spelt in print. And so we have uniformly printed it throughout this edition, except where we made a point to quote with literal exactness.

We have now presented all the matter there is at hand, which seems to illustrate in any way the character and temper of Shakespeare as a man moving among his fellow-men. Scanty as are the materials, enough, we think, has been given, to show that in all the common dealings of life he was eminently gentle, candid, upright, and judicious; open-hearted, genial, and sweet in his social intercourses; among his companions and friends, full of playful wit and sprightly grace; kind to the faults of others, severe to his own; quick to discern and acknowledge merit in another, modest and slow of finding it in himself: while, in the smooth and happy marriage, which he seems to have realized, of the highest poetry and art with systematic and successful prudence in business affairs, we have an example of compact and well-rounded practical manhood, such as may justly engage our perpetual admiration.

This is not the place to enter into a formal review or criticism of the Poet's works. The foregoing pages will show that his marvellous gifts were not so little appreciated in his own time as hath been commonly supposed. Kings, princes, lords, gentlemen, and, what perhaps was still better, com-

mon people, all united in paying homage to his transcendent genius. The noble tribute of Ben Jonson, — than whom few men, perhaps none, ever knew better how to judge and how to write on such a theme, — prefixed to the folio of 1623, indicates how he struck the scholarship of the age. We know not how we can fitlier close this Life than by another tribute from the same great hand. It is from his Poetaster, where the following judgment is pronounced on Virgil, who is commonly understood to represent Shakespeare:

"I judge him of a rectified spirit,
By many revolutions of discourse
(In his bright reason's influence) refin'd
From all the tartarous moods of common men,
Bearing the nature and similitude
Of a right heavenly body; most severe
In fashion and collection of himself,
And then as clear and confident as Jove.
And yet so chaste and tender is his ear,
In suffering any syllable to pass,
That he thinks may become the honour'd name
Of issue to his so examin'd self,
That all the lasting fruits of his full merit,
In his own poems, he doth still distaste;
As if his mind's piece, which he strove to paint,
Could not with fleshly pencils have her right.
But, to approve his works of sovereign worth,
This observation, methinks, more than serves,
And is not vulgar: That which he hath writ
Is with such judgment labour'd, and distill'd
Through all the needful uses of our lives,
That, could a man remember but his lines,
He should not touch at any serious point,
But he might breathe his spirit out of him.
His learning savours not the school-like gloss,
That most consists in echoing words and terms,
And soonest wins a man an empty name;
Nor any long or far-fetch'd circumstance
Wrapp'd in the curious generalities of arts;
But a direct and analytic sum
Of all the worth and first effects of arts.
And for his poesy, 'tis so ramm'd with life,
That it shall gather strength of life with being
And live hereafter more admir'd than now."

SHAKESPEARE'S WILL.[1]

Vicesimo quinto die Martii, Anno Regni Domini nostri Jacobi, nunc Regis Angliæ, &c. decimo quarto, et Scotiæ xlix°.; Annoque Domini 1616.

T. Wmi. Shackspeare.

In the name of God, Amen! I William Shackspeare, of Stratford upon Avon, in the countie of Warr., gent., in perfect health and memorie, God be praysed! doe make and ordayne this my last will and testament in manner and forme followeing; that ys to saye, First, I comend my soule into the handes of God my Creator, hoping and assuredlie beleeving, through thonelie merites of Jesus Christe my Saviour, to be made partaker of lyfe everlastinge, and my bodye to the earth whereof yt ys made. Item, I gyve and bequeath unto my daughter Judyth one hundred and fyftie poundes of lawful English money, to be paied unto her in manner and forme followeing, that ys to saye, one hundred pounds in discharge of her marriage porcion within one yeare after my deceas, with consideracion after the rate of twoe shillinges in the pound for soe long tyme as the same shalbe unpaied unto her after my deceas, and the fyftie poundes residewe thereof upon her surrendering of or gyving of such sufficient securitie as the overseers of this my will shall like of to surrender or graunte all her estate and right that shall discend or come unto her after my deceas, or that shee nowe hath, of, in or to one copiehold tenemente with thappurtenaunces lyeing and being in Stratford upon

[1] Shakespeare's will is here printed as given by Mr. Halliwell from the original in the office of the Prerogative Court, London The will is written on three sheets of paper which are fastened together at the top. The Poet's name is signed at the bottom of the first and second sheets, and his final signature, "By me William Shakspeare," in the middle of the third

Avon aforesaied, in the saied countie of Warr., being parcell or holden of the mannour of Rowington, unto my daughter Susanna Hall and her heires for ever. Item, I gyve and bequeath unto my saied daughter Judith one hundred and fyftie poundes more, if shee or anie issue of her bodie be lyvinge att thend of three yeares next ensueing the daie of the date of this my will, during which tyme my executours are to paie her consideracion from my deceas according to the rate aforesaid; and if she dye within the saied tearme without issue of her bodye, then my will ys, and I doe gyve and bequeath one hundred poundes thereof to my neece Elizabeth Hall, and the fiftie poundes to be sett forth by my executours during the lief of my sister Johane Harte, and the use and proffitt thereof cominge shalbe payed to my saied sister Jone, and after her deceas the saied l.li shall remaine amongst the children of my saied sister equallie to be devided amongst them; but if my saied daughter Judith be lyving att thend of the saied three yeares, or anie yssue of her bodye, then my will ys, and soe I devise and bequeath the saied hundred and fyftie poundes to be sett out by my executours and overseers for the best benefitt of her and her issue, and the stock not to be paied unto her soe long as she shalbe marryed and covert baron; but my will ys, that she shall have the consideracion yearelie paied unto her during her lief, and, after her deceas, the saied stock and consideracion to be paied to her children, if she have anie, and if not, to her executors or assignes, she lyving the saied terme after my deceas: Provided that if such husbond, as she shall att thend of the saied three yeares be marryed unto, or at anie tyme after, doe sufficientlie assure unto her and thissue of her bodie landes awnswereable to the porcion by this my will gyven unto her, and to be adjudged soe by my executours and overseers, then my will ys, that the saied cl.li shalbe paied to such husbond as shall make such assurance to his owne use. Item, I gyve and bequeath unto my saied sister Jone xx.li and all my wearing apparell, to be paied and de-

livered within one yeare after my deceas; and I doe will and devise unto her the house with thappurtenaunces in Stratford, wherein she dwelleth, for her naturall lief, under the yearlie rent of xii. *d.* Item, I gyve and bequeath unto her three sonnes, William Harte, Thomas Hart, and Michaell Harte, fyve poundes apeece, to be paied within one yeare after my deceas. Item, I gyve and bequeath uno the saied Elizabeth Hall all my plate, except my brod silver and gilt bole, that I now have att the date of this my will. Item, I gyve and bequeath unto the poore of Stratford aforesaied tenn poundes; to Mr. Thomas Combe my sword; to Thomas Russell, esquier, fyve poundes, and to Frauncis Collins of the borough of Warr. in the countie of Warr., gentleman, thirteene poundes, sixe shillinges and eightpence, to be paied within one yeare after my deceas. Item, I gyve and bequeath to Hamlett Sadler xxvi. *s.* viii. *d.*, to buy him a ringe; to William Raynolds, gent., xxvi. *s.* viii. *d.*, to buy him a ringe; to my godson William Walker xx. *s.* in gold; to Anthonye Nashe, gent., xxvi. *s.* viii. *d.*; and to Mr. John Nashe, xxvi. *s.* viii. *d.*; and to my fellowes, John Hemynges, Richard Burbage, and Henry Cundell, xxvi. *s.* viii. *d.* apeece, to buy them ringes. Item, I gyve, will, bequeath and devise, unto my daughter Susanna Hall, for better enabling of her to performe this my will, and towardes the performans thereof, all that capitall messuage or tenemente, with thappurtenaunces, in Stratford aforesaid, called the New Place, wherein I nowe dwell, and two messuages or tenementes, with thappurtenaunces, scituat, lyeing, and being in Henley-streete within the borough of Stratford aforesaied; and all my barnes, stables, orchardes, gardens, landes, tenementes, and hereditamentes, whatsoever, scituat, lyeing, and being, or to be had, receyved, perceyved, or taken, within the townes, hamletes, villages, fields, and groundes of Stratford upon Avon, Old Stratford, Bushopton and Welcombe, or in anie of them, in the said countie of Warr. And alsoe all that messuage or tenemente, with

thappurtenaunces, wherein one John Robinson dwelleth, scituat, lyeing, and being in the Blackfriers in London nere the Wardrobe; and all my other landes, tenementes, and hereditamentes whatsoever: To have and to hold all and singuler the saied premisses, with their appurtenaunces, unto the saied Susanna Hall, for and during the terme of her naturall lief; and after her deceas, to the first sonne of her bodie lawfullie yssueinge, and to the heires males of the bodie of the said first sonne lawfullie yssueing; and for defalt of such issue, to the second sonne of her bodie lawfullie issueinge and to the heires males of the bodie of the saied second sonne lawfullie yssueinge; and for defalt of such heires, to the third sonne of the bodie of the saied Susanna lawfullie yssueing, and to the heires males of the bodie of the saied third sonne lawfullie yssueing; and for defalt of such issue, the same soe to be and remaine to the fourth, fyfth, sixte, and seaventh sonnes of her bodie lawfullie issueing, one after another, and to the heires males of the bodies of the saied fourth, fifth, sixte, and seaventh sonnes lawfullie yssueing, in such manner as yt ys before lymitted to be and remaine to the first, second, and third sonns of her bodie, and to theire heires males; and for defalt of such issue, the said premisses to be and remaine to my sayed neece Hall, and the heires males of her bodie lawfullie yssueing; and for defalt of such issue, to my daughter Judith, and the heires males of her bodie lawfullie issucinge; and for defalt of such issue, to the right heires of me the saied William Shackspeare for ever. Item, I gyve unto my wief my second best bed, with the furniture. Item, I gyve and bequeath to my saied daughter Judith my broad silver gilt bole. All the rest of my goodes, chattel, leases, plate, jewels, and houshold stuffe whatsoever, after my dettes and legacies paied, and my funerall expences discharged, I give, devise, and bequeath to my sonne-in-lawe, John Hall, gent., and my daughter Susanna his wief, whom I ordaine and make executours of this my last will and testament. And I doe

intreat and appoint the saied Thomas Russell, esquier, and Frauncis Collins, gent., to be overseers hereof, and doe revoke all former wills, and publishe this to be my last will and testament. In witness whereof I have hereunto put my hand, the daie and yeare first above written.

By me WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE.

Witnes to the publishing hereof,

Fra. Collyns,
Julyus Shawe,
John Robinson,
Hamnet Sadler,
Robert Whattcott,

Probatum coram Magistro Willielmo Byrde, Legum Doctore Comiss, &c. xxii.do die mensis Junii, Anno Domini 1616, *juramento Johannis Hall, unius executorum, &c., cui de bene &c. juret. reservat. potestate &c. Susannæ Hall, alteri executorum &c. cum venerit, &c. petitur* (*Inv. ex.*)

AN HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF THE

ENGLISH DRAMA BEFORE SHAKESPEARE.

CHAPTER I.

MIRACLE-PLAYS.

THE ENGLISH DRAMA, as we have it in Shakespeare, was the slow growth of several centuries. Nor is it clearly traceable to any foreign source: it appears to have been an original and independent growth, the native and free product of the soil; not a mere revival, or reproduction, or continuation of what had existed somewhere else. This position will be found very material when we approach the subject of structure and form; for it evidently infers that the Drama in question is not amenable to any ancient or foreign jurisdiction; that it stands on independent ground, has a life and spirit of its own, is to be viewed as a thing by itself, and judged according to the peculiar laws under which it grew and took its shape. That is, it had just as good a right to differ from any other Drama, as any other had, from it.

The ancient Drama, that which grew to perfection, and, so far as is known, had its origin, in Greece, is universally styled the Classic Drama. By what term to distinguish the modern Drama of Europe, writers are not fully agreed Within a comparatively recent period, it has received from

high authorities the title of the Romantic Drama. A much more appropriate title, as it seems to us, suggested by its Gothic original, and used by earlier and perhaps equally good authorities, is that of the Gothic Drama. Such, accordingly, is the term by which we shall distinguish it in these pages. The fitness of the name, it is thought, will be seen at once from the fact that the thing was an indigenous and self-determined outgrowth from the Gothic mind under Christian culture. Of course, the term naturally carries the idea, that the Drama in question stands on much the same ground relatively to the Classic Drama, as is commonly recognised in the case of Gothic and Classic architecture. We can thus the better realize that each Drama forms a distinct species by itself, so that any argument or criticism urged from the rules of the ancient against the modern is wholly impertinent.

The Gothic Drama, as it fashioned itself in different nations of modern Europe, especially in England and Spain, where it grew up and reached perfection simultaneously and independently, has certain not inconsiderable varieties. Upon the reason and nature of the variations we cannot enlarge: suffice it to say, that they do not reach beyond mere points of detail; so that their effect is to approve all the more forcibly the strength of the common principles which underlie and support them. These principles cover the whole ground of difference from the Classic Drama. The several varieties, therefore, of the Gothic Drama may be justly regarded as bearing concurrent testimony to a common right of freedom from the jurisdiction of ancient rules.

Of the origin and progress of the Drama in England our limits will permit only a brief sketch, not more than enough, perhaps not enough, to give a general idea on the subject. Ample materials for the work are furnished to our hand in Warton's History of English Poetry and Collier's Annals of the Stage, so that the only merit or demerit we can claim is in so selecting and condensing the matter as may best agree with our judgment and our space.

In England, as in the other Christian nations where it can be regarded as at all original, the Drama was of ecclesiastical origin, and for a long time was used only as a means of diffusing among the people a knowledge of the leading facts and doctrines of Christianity as then understood and received. Of course, therefore, it was in substance and character religious, or meant to be so, and had the Clergy for its authors and founders. Nevertheless, we cannot admit the justice of Coleridge's remark on the subject: "The Drama," says he, "recommenced in England, as it first began in Greece, in religion. The people were unable to read, — the Priesthood were unwilling that they should read; and yet their own interest compelled them not to leave the people wholly ignorant of the great events of sacred history. They did that, therefore, by scenic representations, which in after ages it has been attempted to do in Roman Catholic countries by pictures."

Surely, it is of consequence to bear in mind that at that time "the people" had never been able to read: printing had not been heard of in Europe; books were with great difficulty multiplied, and could not be had but at great expense; so that it was impossible "the people" should be able to read; and while there was a simple impossibility in the way, it is not necessary to impute an unwillingness. Nor does there seem to be any good reason for supposing that the Priesthood, in their simplicity of faith, were then at all apprehensive or aware of any danger in the people being able to read. Probably they worked, as honest men, with the best means they could devise: they endeavoured to clothe the most needful of all instruction in such forms, to mould it up with such arts of recreation and pleasure, as might render it interesting and attractive to the popular mind. In all which they seem to have merited any thing but an impeachment of their motives. However, what seems best worth the noting here is, the large share which those early dramatic representations had in shaping the culture of

old England, and in giving to the national mind its character and form. And perhaps later ages, and ourselves as the children of a later age, are more indebted to those rude labours of the Clergy in the cause of religion, than we are aware, or might be willing to acknowledge.

In its course through several ages, the Drama took different forms from time to time, as culture advanced. The earliest form was in what are commonly called Mysteries, though the older and better term is, Plays of Miracles, or Miracle-plays. These were founded, for the most part, on the events of Scripture, though the apocryphal gospels and legends of saints and martyrs were sometimes drawn upon for subjects or for embellishments. In these performances no regard was paid to the rules of natural probability; for, as the operation of the Divine power was assumed, this was treated as a sufficient ground or principle of credibility in itself. Hence, indeed, the name Marvels, Miracles, or Miracle-plays, by which they were commonly known.

The earliest instance that we can refer to of a Miracle-play in England, was near the beginning of the twelfth century. Matthew Paris, in his Lives of the Abbots, written as early as 1240, informs us that Geoffrey, Abbot of St. Albans, while he was yet a secular person brought out the Miracle-play of St. Katharine at Dunstaple; and that for the needed decorations he sought and obtained certain articles "from the Sacristy of St. Albans." Geoffrey, who was from the University of Paris, was then teaching a school at Dunstaple, and the play was performed by his scholars. On the following night, his house was burnt, together with the borrowed articles; which he regarded as a judgment of Heaven, and thereupon assumed a religious habit. Warton thinks the performance to have been about 1110: but we learn from Bulæus that Geoffrey became Abbot of St. Albans in 1119; and all that can with certainty be affirmed is, that the play was performed before he took on him a religious character: it may have been somewhat earlier or

somewhat later than 1110. Bulæus also informs us that the thing was not then a novelty; but that it was customary for teachers and scholars to get up such exhibitions.

Our next piece of information on the subject is from the Life of Thomas a Becket, by William Fitzstephen, as quoted in Stowe's Survey of London, 1599. Becket died in 1170, and the Life was probably written about twelve years after that event. Fitzstephen gives a description of London, and after referring to the public amusements of ancient Rome, he continues thus: "In lieu of such theatrical shows and performances of the stage, London has plays of a more sacred kind, representing the miracles which holy confessors have wrought, or the sufferings whereby the firmness of martyrs has been displayed."

It appears that about the middle of the next century itinerant actors were well known; for one of the regulations found in the Burton Annals has the following, under the date of 1258: "Actors may be entertained, not because they are actors, but because of their poverty; and let not their plays be seen, nor heard, nor the performance of them allowed, in the presence of the Abbot or the monks." There was some difference of opinion among the Clergy as to the lawfulness of such exhibitions; and in an Anglo-French poem written about this time they are censured with much sharpness, and the using of them is restricted to certain places and persons. An English version, or rather paraphrase, of this poem was made by Robert Brunne in 1303. The writer sets forth, among other things, what pastimes are allowed to "a clerk of order," declaring it lawful for him to perform Miracle-plays of the birth and resurrection of Christ in churches, but a sin to witness them "on the highways or greens." He also reproves the practice, then not uncommon, of aiding the performance of Miracle-plays by lending horses or harness from the monasteries, and especially declares it sacrilege if a priest or clerk lend the hallowed vestments for such a purpose.

The doctrine of transubstantiation seems to have been especially fruitful in this kind of performances. The festival of *Corpus Christi*, designed for the furthering of this doctrine, was instituted by Pope Urban IV. in 1264. Within a few years from that date, Miracle-plays were annually performed at Chester during Whitsuntide: they were also introduced at Coventry, York, Durham, Lancaster, Bristol, Cambridge, and divers other towns; so that the thing became a sort of established usage throughout the kingdom. A considerable variety of subjects, especially such as relate to the incarnation, the passion, and the resurrection of the Saviour, was embraced in the plan of these exhibitions; the purpose being, if we may credit Robert Brunne, to extend an orthodox belief in those fundamental verities of our religion.

A very curious specimen of the plays that grew out of the *Corpus Christi* festival has been lately discovered in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, the manuscript being certainly as old, it is said, as the reign of Edward IV. For our knowledge of it we are indebted to Mr. Collier, who says "it is perhaps the only specimen of the kind in our language." It is called The Play of the Blessed Sacrament, and is founded on a miracle alleged to have been wrought in the forest of Arragon, in 1461. The scene of action was doubtless imaginary, and the legend much older than the date assigned; the time of the miracle being drawn down near that of the representation, in order that the spectators might be the more impressed with the reality of the events. In form, it closely resembles the Miracle-plays founded on Scripture; our Saviour being, as was common in such plays, one of the characters: the others are five Jews, a Bishop, a Priest, a Christian merchant, a physician, and his servant. The merchant, having the key of the church, steals away the Host, and sells it to the Jews for £100, under a promise that they will become Christians, in case they find its miraculous powers verified. They then put the Host to various

tests. Being stabbed with their daggers, it bleeds, so that one of the Jews goes mad at the sight. They next attempt nailing it to a post, when one of them has his hand torn off as he goes to driving the nails: whereupon the doctor and his man come in to dress the wound, but, after a long comic scene betwixt them, are driven out as quacks and impostors. The Jews then proceed to boil the Host, but the water forthwith turns blood-red. Finally, they cast it into a heated oven, which presently bursts asunder, and an image of the Saviour rises and addresses the Jews, who make good their promise on the spot. They kneel to the Bishop; the merchant confesses his crime, declares his penitence, is admonished, and forgiven under a strict charge never again to buy or sell. The whole winds up with an epilogue from the Bishop, enforcing the moral of the play, which of course turns on the doctrine of transubstantiation.

There are three sets or series of Miracle-plays extant, severally known as the Towneley, the Coventry, and the Chester collections. The first includes thirty plays, and the manuscript is supposed to be as old as the time of Henry VI. The second consists of forty-two plays, said to have been performed at Coventry on the festival of *Corpus Christi*. The manuscript of them appears to have been written as early at least as the time of Henry VII. The third series, called Chester Whitsun Plays, numbers twenty-four. These are extant in three manuscripts, the oldest of which was made by Edward Gregory, who at the end calls himself "a scholar of Bunbury," and adds that the writing was finished in 1591. The three sets have all been printed within a few years under the patronage of the Shakespeare Society.

Mr. Markland makes out a strong probability that Miracle-plays were first acted at Chester in 1268, only four years after the establishment of the *Corpus Christi* festival. From that time, they were repeated yearly, with some interruptions, till 1577. The Towneley series probably belonged to Widkirk Abbey: at what time they grew into use there and

at Coventry, is not certainly known. But we have abundant evidence that such exhibitions formed a regular part of English life in the reign of Edward III., which began in 1327. For Chaucer alludes to "plays of miracles" as things of common occurrence, and in The Milleres Tale he makes it a prominent feature of the parish clerk, "this Absolon, that joly was and gay," that he performed in them:

> "Sometime, to shew his lightnesse and maistrie,
> He plaieth Herode on a skaffolde hie."

And in 1378, which was the first year of Richard II., the choristers of St. Paul's, London, petitioned the king to prohibit some ignorant persons from acting plays founded on Scripture, as conflicting with the interest of the Clergy, who had incurred expense in getting up a set of plays on similar subjects. And we learn from Stowe, that in 1391 the parish clerks of London performed a play at Skinner's Well, near Smithfield, which lasted three days, and was witnessed by the king, the queen, and nobles of the realm. Stowe also informs us, that in 1409 there was a great play at the same place, "which lasted eight days, and was of matter from the creation of the world."

We have already spoken somewhat of the part which was taken by the Clergy in these old dramatic performances. Something further on this point may well be added. It is recorded of Lydgate, monk of Bury, that he wrote a series of plays from the creation. And the register of the Guild of *Corpus Christi* at York, which was a religious fraternity, mentions, in 1408, books of plays, various banners and flags, beards, vizards, crowns, diadems, and scaffolds, belonging to the society; which shows that its members were at that time concerned in the representation of Miracle-plays. It appears that a few years afterwards these performances, because of certain abuses attending them, were discontinued: but in 1426 William Melton, a friar, who is called "a professor of holy pageantry," preached several sermons in fa-

vour of them; and the result of his efforts was, that they were then made annual, suitable measures being taken for preventing the former disorders. But the best evidence as to the share the Clergy had in these representations is furnished by the account-book of Thetford Priory from 1461 to 1540; which contains numerous entries of payments to players, and in divers cases expressly states that members of the convent assisted in the performances. These were commonly held two or three times a year: in 1531 there were five repetitions of them; after which time there are but three entries of plays wherein the members participated with the common actors; the old custom being broken up most likely by the progress of the Reformation. Further information on the subject is supplied by Dean Colet, who in 1511 delivered an *oratio ad clerum* at St. Paul's, in which he complains that the Clergy lose themselves in banquetings and vain discourse, in *plays* and sports, in hawking and hunting; and he urges them to study the laws and holy rules of the fathers, which forbid clergymen to be traders, usurers, hunters, *public players*, or soldiers.

The custom in question, however, was by no means universal. We have already seen that in 1391 and 1409 plays were acted by the parish clerks of London. In cities and large towns, these performances were generally in the hands of the trading companies. Our information touching the *Corpus Christi* plays at Coventry extends from 1416 to 1591; during which period there is no sign of the Clergy having any share in them. The records of Chester also show that the whole business was there managed by laymen. And in 1487 a Miracle-play on the descent of Christ into hell was acted before Henry VII. by the charity boys of Hyde Abbey and St. Swithin's Priory. Long before this date, acting was taken up as a distinct profession, and regular companies of actors were formed; but of these we shall have to speak more hereafter.

That churches and chapels of monasteries were at first

and for a long time after, used as theatres, is very certain The Anglo-French poem already referred to informs us that Miracle-plays were sometimes performed in churches and cemeteries, the Clergy getting them up and acting in them. And Burnet tells us that Bishop Bonner as late as 1542 issued an order to his clergy, forbidding "all manner of common plays, games, or interludes to be played, set forth, or declared within their churches and chapels." Nor was the custom wholly discontinued till some time after that; for in 1572 was printed a tract which has a passage inferring that churches were still sometimes used for such purposes. The author is remarking how the Clergy read the service: "He again posteth it over as fast as he can gallop; for either he hath two places to serve, or else there are some games to be played in the afternoon, as lying for the whetstone, heathenish dancing for the ring, a bear or a bull to be baited, or else jack-an-apes to ride on horseback, or *an interlude to be played*; and if no place else can be gotten, it must be *done in the church.*"

When plays were performed in the open air, temporary scaffolds or stages were commonly erected for the purpose; though in some cases the scaffold was set on wheels, so as to be easily moved from one part of the town to another. From an account of Chester, written in the time of Elizabeth, it appears that the structure there used had two stages, one above the other; the lower being closed in, to serve as a dressing-room for the actors; while the performance was on the upper stage where it could be seen by all the spectators. Sometimes the lower stage seems to have been used for hell, the devils rising out of it, or sinking into it, as occasion required. It is pretty evident, however, that in some of the plays more than one scaffold must have been used. And Mr. Collier thinks there can be no doubt, from some of the stage-directions in the Towneley and Coventry plays, that two, three, and even four scaffolds were erected round a centre, the actors going from one to another across "the

mid place," as the scene changed, or their several parts required.

As to the general character of the plays themselves, this may best be shown by brief analyses of some of them. Our specimens will be chiefly from the Towneley series, as these are the most ancient. The first play of the set includes the Creation, the revolt of Lucifer and his adherents, and their expulsion from heaven. It opens with a short address from the Deity, who then begins the creation, and, after a song by the cherubim, descends from the throne, and retires; Lucifer usurps it, and asks his fellows how he appears. The good and bad angels have different opinions on the subject: the Deity soon returns, and ends the dispute by casting the rebels with their leader out of heaven. Adam and Eve are then created, and Satan ends the piece with a speech venting his envy of their happiness in Eden.

The second play relates to the killing of Abel. It is opened by Cain's plough-boy with a sort of prologue, in which he declares himself "a merry lad," and warns the spectators to be silent, wishing, if any one make a noise, "the devil hang him up to dry." Cain then enters with a plough and team, and quarrels with the boy for refusing to drive the team. Presently Abel comes in, and wishes God may speed Cain, who meets his kind word with a very unmentionable request. The killing then proceeds, and is followed by the cursing of Cain; after which, he calls the boy, and beats him "but to use his hand;" he owns the slaying of his brother, and the boy counsels flight, lest the bailiffs catch them. Next we have a course of buffoonery: Cain makes a mock proclamation in the king's name; the boy repeats it blunderingly after him, and is then sent off with the team; and the piece ends with a speech by Cain to the spectators, bidding them farewell forever, before he goes to the devil.

No. 3d of the series is occupied with the Deluge. After a lamentation from Noah on the sinfulness of the world,

God is introduced repenting that He has made man, telling Noah how to build the Ark, and blessing him and his. Noah's wife is an arrant shrew, and they fall at odds in the outset, both of them swearing by the Virgin Mary: she complains that he does nothing for the family. Noah begins and finishes the Ark on the spot, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" then tells his wife what is coming, and invites her on board. His description of the flood is rather poetical: part of it may be rendered in modern English thus: "Behold the heavens! All the cataracts are opened, both great and small; the seven planets have left their stations; thunders and lightning strike down the strong halls, bowers, castles, and towers." Her ladyship stoutly refuses to embark; this brings on another flare-up; he befriends her with a whip; she resents that kindness, but comes off second best; wishes herself a widow, and the same to all the other wives in the audience; he exhorts all the husbands to break their wives in, lest they get broken in by them: at length harmony is restored by the intervention of the sons; all go on board, and pass three hundred and fifty days talking about the weather: a raven is sent out, then a dove; they all debark, and there an end.

Two plays of the series are taken up with the adoration of the shepherds. After a soliloquy by the first shepherd on the uncertainty of human life, the second enters, and picks a quarrel with him; then the third arrives on horseback, parts them, and tells them he never saw any act so but "the fools of Gotham:" thereupon they all become friends again, eat supper together, drink ale, sing songs, and go to sleep. While they are asleep, an angel announces to them the birth of Christ, and they, waking, see the star. The third shepherd refers to Isaiah and other prophets, and quotes Virgil, though not correctly: the second objects to this display of learning; and they hasten to Bethlehem, and make their offerings.

The next play, No. 12th, is worthy of special notice, as being not a religious play at all, but a piece of broad comedy, approaching to downright farce, and having touches of rude wit and humour. The three shepherds, after talking awhile about their shrewish wives, are on the point of striking up a song, when an old acquaintance of theirs, named Mak, whose character for honesty is none of the best, comes amongst them. They suspect him of meditating some sly trick; so, on going to sleep, they take care to have him lie between them, lest he should play the wolf among their woolly subjects. While they are snoring, he steals out, helps himself to a fat sheep, and makes off with it, as he had often done before. His wife fears he may be snatched up and hanged; but her wit suggests a scheme, which is presently agreed upon, that she shall make as if she had just been adding a member to the family, and that the sheep shall be snugly wrapped up in the cradle. This done, Mak hastens back, and resumes his sleeping-posture, to avoid suspicion. In the morning, the shepherds wake much refreshed, one of them saying that he feels "as light as leaf on a tree;" but Mak pretends to have a crick in the neck from lying long in an uneasy position; and as they walk to the fold, he whips away home. They soon miss the sheep; swear by St. Thomas of Kent that they suspect Mak; go to his cottage; knock: he lets them in, tells them what his wife has been doing, and begs them not to disturb her: she joins in the request; and, as the least noise seems to go through her head, they are at first taken in: they ask to see the child before they go, and one of them offers to give it sixpence: Mak tells them the child is asleep, and will cry badly if waked: still they press on; pull up the covering of the cradle, see their sheep, know it by the ear-mark; but the wife assures them it is a child, and that evil spirits have transformed it into what they see: this will not go, they are not to be gulled any further; they beat Mak till they are tired out: then lie down to rest; the star in the east appears, and

the angel sings the *Gloria in excelsis:* then they proceed to Bethlehem, where they find the infant Saviour, and give Him the first, "a bob of cherries," the second, a bird, the third, a tennis ball.

No. 17th, which represents the baptism of Christ, deserves mention, in that a passage relating to the seven sacraments of the Romish Church is crossed out, and the *number* of the sacraments erased; thus proving that the play was in use after the Reformation.

In the eighteenth play of the series, we have the betrayal. Pilate with his burnished brand exacts silence, calling himself the grandsire of Mahound, and then goes to talking with Annas and Caiaphas about the miracles of Christ. Presently, Judas enters, offers to betray his Master, and accepts thirty pence in reward. Next, Christ is discovered eating the Paschal lamb in the house of a man named *Pater-Familias:* He foretells the betrayal; and *Trinitas*, who is a personification of the Trinity, comes in to tell Him that He must descend into hell, to release Adam, Eve, the Prophets, &c. This is followed by the apprehension, which is accomplished by Pilate, and some knights whom he describes as "courteous Cæsars of Cain's kindred." — In the nineteenth, Christ is carried, by two Torturers, before Annas and Caiaphas, and the latter, enraged at His silence, breaks forth in divers insults, threatening to thrust out both His eyes, to put Him in the stocks, and to hang Him. By the advice of Annas, He is then sent before Pilate; and the piece ends with the Torturers and a man named Froward-taunt beating Him. — No. 20th presents Christ on Pilate's scaffold, who makes a speech, avowing himself "full of subtlety, falsehood, guile, and treachery," and the friend of all that "use backbitings and slanderings." He refuses to sentence Christ, but secretly gives orders for the crucifixion while washing his hands. St. John carries the news to the Virgin and the other women; and at the close Christ enters bearing the cross, and foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem. This

brings us to No. 21st, in which, after a speech from Pilate, reviling the audience, calling them "harlots, dastards, thieves, and michers," and telling them to keep still, the hands of Christ are bound, and the cross erected. The Torturers then taunt and mock Him, speaking of Him as a king just going to ride in a tournament. This is followed by the nailing of Him to the cross; after which the Torturers draw cuts for His garment. At last, "a blind knight," Longius by name, being led in, thrusts a spear into the Saviour's side, when some blood flows upon his eyes, and their sight is immediately restored. — These four pieces, it would seem, were meant to be performed together; being, in effect, much the same as the several acts or scenes of a regular drama.

No. 23d sets forth the descent into hell. Adam sees the "gleam" of Christ's coming, and speaks of it to Eve and the Prophets, who sing for joy. Rybald, the porter of hell, calls in terror on Beelzebub to make ready for resistance; and divers fiends, together with "Sir Satan our sire," are summoned, while "watches are set on the walls." Satan, angry at being disturbed, threatens to knock out Beelzebub's brains. The devils refusing to open the gates, Christ exclaims, *Attollite portas*, and they forthwith burst. Satan from below orders the fiends to hurl Him down: being answered "that is soon said," he then goes up from the pit of hell; Christ tells him He has come to fetch His own, and the Father hath sent Him. Satan then argues with Him on the injustice of releasing those already damned: his arguments failing, he begs Christ to release him also. Christ replies, that He will leave him the company of Cain, Judas, Achitophel, and some others; and that such as obey His laws shall never come thither: whereat Satan rejoices, that hell will soon be more populous than ever, as he means to walk east and west, seducing mankind into his service; but Christ exclaiming, "Devil, I command thee to go down into thy seat, where thou shalt sit," he "sinks into hell-pit.

Adam, Eve, Moses, and the Prophets being then set free conclude by singing *Te Deum laudamus*.

The Chester and Coventry plays, for the most part, closely resemble the Towneley series, both in the subjects and the manner of treating them; so that little would be gained for our purpose by dwelling much upon them. A portion, however, of the Coventry series, from the 8th to the 15th, inclusive, have certain peculiarities that call for special notice, as they show the first beginnings or buddings of a higher dramatic growth, which afterwards resulted in what are called Moral-plays. This part of the set all form, in effect, one piece, and, for our present purpose, may as well be so regarded. They relate to matters connected with the Saviour's birth, and are partly founded on an apocryphal gospel. One of the persons is named Contemplation, who, though having no part in the action, serves as speaker of prologues, and moralizes on the events. This, evidently, is an allegorical personage, that is, an abstract idea personified, such as afterwards grew into general use, and gave character to the stage-performances. And we have other allegorical personages, Verity, Justice, Mercy, and Peace.

The eighth play represents Joachim sorrowing that he has no child, and praying that the cause of his sorrow may be removed: Anna, his wife, heartily joins with him, taking all the blame of their childlessness to herself. In answer to their prayers, an angel descends, to announce to them the birth of a daughter, who shall be called Mary. Next follows the presentation of Mary, which is done in dumb show, Contemplation remarking on what passes. Mary is represented "all in white, as a child of three years' age;" and after a long interview between her and the Bishop, Contemplation informs the audience that fourteen years will elapse before her next appearance, and promises that they shall soon see "the Parliament of heaven." Next, we have the ceremony of Mary's betrothment. The Bishop summons the males of David's house to appear in the temple, each

bringing a white rod; being divinely assured that he whose rod should bud and bloom was to be the husband of Mary. Joseph comes as one of them: after a deal of urging, he offers up his rod, and the miracle is at once apparent, "a dead stock beareth flowers free." When asked if he will be married to the maiden, he deprecates such an event with all his might, and pleads his old age in bar of it; nevertheless the marriage proceeds. Then we have many words of tender farewell between the Virgin and her parents, the mother saying to her, among other things, —

> "I pray thee, Mary, my sweet child,
> Be lowly and buxom, meek and mild,
> Sad and sober, and nothing wild."

While this is doing, Joseph goes out, but presently returns, and informs the Virgin that he has "hired a pretty little house" for her and her maids to live in, and that he will "go labouring in far country" to maintain her. Then comes the Parliament of heaven, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost taking part in the deliberations. The Virtues plead for pity and grace to man; the Father replies that the "time is come of reconciliation;" Verity objects, urging that there can be no peace made between sin and the law; this calls forth an earnest prayer from Mercy in man's behalf; Justice takes up the argument on the other side; Peace answers, that "if man's soul should abide in hell, between God and man ever would be division," in which case she, Peace, could not live; which brings them all to accord, as "heaven and earth is pleas'd with peace." The Son then raises the question how the thing shall be done: after Verity, Justice, Mercy, and Peace have tried their wit and found it unequal to the cause, a council of the Trinity is held, when the Son offers to undertake the work by assuming the form of a man, the Father consents, and the Holy Ghost agrees to co-operate. Gabrie is then sent on an errand of salutation to Mary: he makes known to her the decree of the Incarnation; after

which the Holy Ghost, the Son, and the Father descend to her, each giving her three benedictions.

Joseph is absent some months. On returning, he discovers the condition of Mary, is in great affliction, and reproaches her; but, an angel coming to him and explaining the matter, he makes amends. Then comes the visit of Joseph and Mary to Elizabeth. After which, Ahizachar the Bishop holds a court, and his officer summons to it a large number of people, all having English names, the purpose being, to make sport for the audience, who are told to "ring well in their purse" thus showing that money was collected for the performance. Mary is brought before this court, to be tried for infidelity, and Joseph also, for tamely submitting to it. Two Detractors appear as their accusers. The innocence of Joseph is proved by his drinking, without harm, a liquid which, were he guilty, would cause spots on his face. Mary also drinks of the same, unhurt; whereupon one of the accusers affirms that the Bishop has changed the draught; but is himself compelled to drink what there is left, which cures him of his unbelief. No. 15th relates to the Nativity. It opens with a dialogue between Joseph and Mary: he, it seems, is not fully satisfied of her innocence, but his doubts are all removed in this manner: Mary, seeing a high tree full of ripe cherries, asks him to gather some for her; he replies, that the father of her child may help her to them; and the tree forthwith bows down its top to her hand. Soon after, the Saviour's birth takes place on the stage.

The necessities of the subject, or what seem such to us, must be our excuse for stating some of these things; which, though doubtless full of solemnity to the simple minds who witnessed them, are apt to strike us as highly ludicrous; so that they can hardly be mentioned without seeming irreverence.

Besides these three sets of Miracle-plays, there are several other specimens, some of which seem to require notice. The first to be mentioned is a set of three, known as the

Digby Miracle-plays, on the Conversion of St. Paul. These are opened and closed by *Poeta*, in person. St. Paul first enters on horseback, and after his conversion he puts on a "disciple's weed." One of the persons is Belial, whose appearance and behaviour are indicated by the stage-direction, — "Here to enter a Devil with thunder and fire." He makes a soliloquy in self-glorification, and then complains of the dearth of news; after which we have the stage-direction, — "Here shall enter another Devil called Mercury, with a firing, coming in haste, crying and roaring." He tells Belial of St. Paul's conversion, and declares the belief that "the devil's law" is done for; whereat Belial also is in dismay. They plot to stir up the Jewish Bishops in the cause; which done, they "vanish away with a fiery flame and a tempest."

The play to be next considered relates to Mary Magdalen. This seems to have required four scaffolds for the exhibition, as Tiberius, Herod, Pilate, and the Devil have each their several stations; and one of the directions is, — "Here shall enter the prince of devils on a stage, and hell underneath the stage." Mary lives in a castle inherited from her father, who figures in the opening of the play as King Cyrus. A ship owned by St. Peter is brought into the space between the scaffolds, and Mary and some others make a long voyage in it. The heroine's castle is besieged by the Devil with the Seven Deadly Sins, and carried: Lechery then beguiles her with a flattering speech; Luxury takes her to a tavern; there a gallant named Curiosity treats her to "sops and wine," and seduces her. The raising of Lazarus, who also had Cyrus for his father, takes place in the performance; and the process of Mary's repentance and amendment is carried through in proper order. Tiberius makes a long speech glorifying himself; a parasite named Serybil flatters him on his good looks, and he in return blesses Serybil's face, which was probably carbuncled as badly as Bardolph's. Herod makes his boast in similar style, and afterwards goes

to bed, though merely in order, it seems, to make room for other actors. The devils, headed by Satan, perform a mock pagan mass to Mahound. The three kings of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil figure in the play, but not prominently. A priest winds up the performance, requesting the spectators not to charge the faults on the poet, but on his want of skill or cunning.

Here, again, we see the gradual introduction of allegorical characters, in the shape of virtues and mental qualities personified, as Lechery, Luxury, and Curiosity. This is carried still further in another play, of a later date, called The Life and Repentance of Mary Magdalen; where we have divers impersonations of abstract ideas, such as Law, Faith, Repentance, Pride, Cupidity, Carnal-concupiscence, and Infidelity; the latter very clearly foreshadowing the Vice or Iniquity, who figured so largely in Moral-plays. Infidelity acts as the heroine's paramour, and assumes many disguises, to seduce her into all sorts of vice, wherein he is aided by Pride, Cupidity, and Carnal-concupiscence. After she has reached the climax of sin, he advises her "not to make two hells instead of one," but to live merrily in this world, since she is sure of perdition in the next; and his advice succeeds for a while. On the other hand, Law, Faith, Repentance, Justification, and Love strive to recover her, and the latter half of the piece is taken up with this work of benevolence. At last, Christ expels the seven devils, who "roar terribly;" whereupon Infidelity and his associates give her up. The piece closes with a dialogue between Mary, Justification, and Love, the latter two rejoicing in the salvation of a sinner.

This play was printed in 1567, and is described in the title-page as "not only godly, learned, and fruitful, but also well furnished with pleasant mirth and pastime, very delectable for those which shall hear or read the same: made by the learned clerk, Lewis Wager." It bears clear internal evidence of having been written after the Reformation; and

the prologue shows that it was acted by itinerant players, and had been performed "at the university."

Four Miracle-plays have come down to us, which were written by Bishop Bale, and printed somewhere on the Continent in 1538. The most notable point concerning them is, their being the first known attempt to use the stage in furtherance of the Reformation. One of them is entitled Christ's Temptation. It opens with Christ in the wilderness, faint through hunger; and His first speech is meant to refute the Romish doctrine touching the efficacy of fasting. Satan joins Him in the disguise of a hermit, and the whole temptation proceeds according to Scripture. In one of his arguments, Satan vents his spite against "false priests and bishops," but plumes himself that "the Vicar of Rome" will worship and befriend him. In the epilogue, the author in his own person maintains the fitness of letting the people have the Bible to read, and belabours the Romanists for wishing to keep them in ignorance.

Another of Bale's Miracle-plays is called The Three Laws of Nature, Moses, and Christ. In his Expostulation or Complaint, he refers to this play, and says, — "Therein it is largely declared, how that faithless Antichrist of Rome, with his clergy, hath been a blemish, darkener, confounder, and poisoner of all wholesome laws." Bale also wrote several plays of another kind, of one of which some account is given in our Introduction to King John.

The Miracle-play of King Darius, printed in 1565, is founded on the Third Book of Esdras, which is excluded even from the Apocrypha of our Bible. It is scarce worth notice, except that Iniquity with his wooden dagger has a leading part in the action. He, together with Importunity and Partiality, has divers contests with Equity, Charity, and Constancy: for a while he has the better of them, but at last they catch him alone; each in turn threatens him with sore visitings; then follows the direction, — "Here somebody must cast fire to Iniquity;" who probably had some

fireworks about his person, to explode for the amusement of the audience as he went out.

The play of Abraham's Sacrifice, printed in 1575, is a translation by Golding; the original having been written by the celebrated Beza, and performed at Lausanne about 1550. It opens with a dialogue between Abraham and Sarah, who unite in singing a hymn. Satan then enters "in the habit of a monk," and makes a long speech to himself, exulting in the wicked pranks he has played in that disguise. He then slips aside; a band of shepherds strike up a song, during which Abraham receives the Divine command, and he and Isaac take leave of Sarah. The fiend still trusts that Abraham's resolution will break down, and watches narrowly during the sacrifice, speaking aside. At first Abraham's resolution falters, he drops the knife, then resolves again, and is about to strike, when the angel enters to stay his hand, and tells him to sheathe his knife. In this part, the play is much inferior to the corresponding plays of the Towneley, Chester, and Coventry sets; which have some jets of tender pathos, such as to make the lip quiver, and put jewels in the eye.

Hitherto, we have met with scarce any thing that can be regarded as portraiture of individual character, though somewhat of that sort may be alleged in the case of Mak in No. 12th of the Towneley series. The truth is, character and action, in the proper sense of the terms, were hardly thought of in the making of Miracle-plays; the work aiming at nothing higher than a literal or mechanical reflection of facts and events; sometimes relieved indeed with certain generalities of popular humour and satire, but without any contexture of individual traits. We now come to a piece which deserves remark, as indicating how, under the pressure of general dramatic improvement, Miracle-plays tried to rise above their proper sphere, and still retain their proper form. It is entitled "A new, merry, and witty Comedy or Interlude, treating upon the History of Jacob and Esau;" was

printed in 1568, but probably written as early as 1557. It is of very regular construction, having five Acts, which are duly subdivided into scenes. Besides the Scripture characters, are Ragau, Esau's servant; Mido, a boy who leads blind Isaac; Hanon and Zethar, two of his neighbours; Abra, a girl who assists Rebecca; and Debora, an old nurse. It is opened by Ragau, who enters "with his horn at his back and his hunting-staff in his hand, leading three greyhounds, or one, as may be gotten." His master, Esau, then comes, and they set forth together on a hunt; Rebecca urges Jacob to secure his brother's birthright; Esau returns with a raging appetite, and Jacob demands his birthright as the condition of relieving him with a mess of rice pottage; he consents, and Ragau laughs at his simplicity, while Jacob, Rebecca, and Abra sing a psalm of thanksgiving. These things occupy the first two Acts: in the third Esau and his servant take another hunt. The blessing of Jacob occurs in the fourth Act; Rebecca tasking her cookery to the utmost in dressing a kid, and succeeding in her scheme. In the last, Esau comes back, and learns from his father what has been done in his absence. The plot and incidents are managed with due propriety and decorum; the characters are discriminated with considerable art; the versification is remarkably good for the time; the comic portions show some neatness and delicacy of wit and humour; and, all together, the play is far superior to any preceding attempt in the same line.

In the interlude, as it is called, of Godly Queen Esther, printed in 1561, we have a Miracle-play going still further out of itself. One of the characters is named Hardy-dardy, who, with some qualities of the Vice, foreshadows the Jester or professional Fool of the later Drama; wearing motley, and pretending weakness or disorder of intellect, to the end that his wit may run the more at large, and strike with the more effect. Hardy-dardy offers himself as a servant to Haman: after Haman has urged him with divers remarks

in dispraise of fools, he sagely replics, that "some wise man must be fain sometime to do on a fool's coat." Nor is he so ignorant but that he can quote Ovid and Valerius Maximus. Besides the Scripture characters, the play has several allegorical personages, as Pride, Ambition, and Adulation: these three are represented as making their wills, bequcathing all their bad qualities to Haman, and thereby ruining him. Three courtiers having discussed the merits of wealth, power, virtue, wisdom, and noble blood, King Ahasuerus has all the maiden beauties of his kingdom brought before him; which done, he makes choice of Esther for his wife. After her elevation, Queen Esther has a chapel royal, well supplied with music and singers for her delight, thus imitating her royal sister, Elizabeth. One of the persons mentioning the likelihood of a war with Scotland and France, Hardy-dardy thereupon informs us that he gets his wine from the latter country. And there are divers other allusions to things and persons of England, though the scene lies in Assyria.

CHAPTER II.

MORAL-PLAYS.

The purpose and idea of Miracle-plays was, to inculcate, in a popular way, what may be termed the theological verities: at first, they took their substance and form solely with a view to this end; the securing of an orthodox faith being then, from the recent prevalence of heathenism, naturally looked upon as the one all-important concern. In course of time, the thirst for novelty and variety drew them beyond their original sphere, of revealed religion, into that of natural ethics. By degrees, allegorical impersonations came, as we

have seen, to be more or less mixed up with Scripture characters and events; the aim being, to illustrate and enforce the virtues that refer immediately to the practical conduct of life. Doubtless, the instincts of duty, as, under Christian culture, they emerged more and more into the clear light of consciousness, had much to do in furthering this innovation. The new-comers kept encroaching more and more upon the ancient tenants: invited in as auxiliaries, they remained as principals; and at last quite superseded and replaced the original occupants of the ground. Hence there grew into use quite a different style or order of workmanship, a distinct class of symbolical or allegorical dramas; that is, dramas made up entirely of abstract ideas personified. These are properly termed, from their structure and purpose, Moral-plays. We shall see hereafter, that much the same course and process of transition was repeated in the gradual rising of genuine Comedy and Tragedy out of the allegorical dramas.

Of course, representations of the Devil made a legitimate part of the Miracle-plays. Nor was it without a profound insight of nature, that in those representations he was endowed in large measure with a biting, caustic humour, and with a coarse, scoffing, profane wit. To these was properly joined an exaggerated grotesqueness of look and manner, such as would awaken mixed emotions of fear, mirth, and disgust. In these qualities of mind and person, together with the essential malignity, of which they are the proper surface and outside, we have, no doubt, the germs of both Comedy and Tragedy. For, in the nature of things, the horrible and the ridiculous easily pass into each other, both being indeed but different phases of one and the same thing. Accordingly, the Devil, under one name or another, continued to propagate himself on the stage some time after his original co-actors had withdrawn.

It is plain, also, that from the nature and principle of the thing an allegorical personage, called Iniquity, Vice, or some

such name, would be among the first characters to take stand in Moral-plays, as a personification of the evil tendencies in man. And the Vice, thus originating from the mora view of things, would needs be, evidently, a sort of counterpart to that more ancient impersonation of evil which took its origin from the theological sphere. The Devil, being the stronger principle, would naturally have use for the Vice as his agent or factor. Hence we may discover in these two personages points of mutual sympathy and attraction; and, in fact, it was in and through them that the two species of drama first met and coalesced into one; Miracle-plays borrowing the Vice as a primitive up-shoot of Moral-plays, and the latter retaining the Devil as the most vigorous and operative element of the former. Nor is it anywise strange that the Vice, while acting as the Devil's factor, should for that very reason be fond of abusing and belabouring him: on the contrary, this is his most natural means of stifling or escaping from the sense whom he is serving, and that he is to have nothing but pain and perdition in reward of his service.

In Moral-plays the Devil and the Vice, or at least one of them, almost always bore a leading part, though not always under those names. Most commonly, for causes already stated, the two were retained together; though there are some cases of each figuring apart from the other. We have ample proof that there was no sparing of pains to give the Devil as hideous an aspect as possible. He was made an out-and-out monster in appearance, all hairy and shaggy, with a "bottle nose" and an "evil face," having horns, hoofs, and a long tail; so that the sight had been at once loathsome and ludicrous, but for the great strength and quickness of wit, and the fiendish, yet merry and waggish malignity, which usually marked his conversation; though he was sometimes endowed with a most protean versatility of mind and person, so that he could walk abroad as "plain devil," scaring all he met, or steal into society as a prudent

counsellor, a dashing gallant, or whatsoever else would best work his ends.

As for the Vice, he commonly acted the part of a broad, rampant jester and buffoon, full of mad pranks and mischief-making, liberally dashed with a sort of tumultuous, swaggering fun. He was arrayed in a fantastic garb, with something of drollery in its appearance, so as to aid the comic effect of his action, and armed with a dagger of lath, perhaps as symbolical that his use of weapons was but to the end of provoking his own defeat, and that he was dangerous only as a friend. He was hugely given to cracking ribald and saucy jokes with and upon the Devil, and treating him in a style of coarse familiarity and mockery; and a part of his ordinary function was, to bestride the Devil, and beat him till he roared, and the audience roared with him; the scene ending with his being carried off to hell on the Devil's back. Much of the old custom in these two personages is amusingly set forth in Ben Jonson's Staple of News, where, at the end of each Act, we have some imaginary spectators commenting on the performance. At the end of Act i., one of them expressing a fear that the play has no Fool in it, as the Vice was often called, Gossip Tattle delivers herself thus: "My husband, Timothy Tattle. God rest his poor soul! was wont to say, there was no play without a Fool and a Devil in't; he was for the Devil still, God bless him! The Devil for his money, he would say; I would fain see the Devil. And why would you so fain see the Devil? would I say. Because he has horns, wife, and may be a cuckold as well as a devil, he would answer." It being asked, — "But was the Devil a proper man?" Gossip Mirth replies, — "As fine a gentleman of his inches as ever I saw trusted to the stage or any where else; and loved the commonwealth as well as ever a patriot of them all: he would carry away the Vice on his back, quick to hell, wherever he came, and reform abuses." Again, at the end of Act ii., the question being put, — "How like you the Vice in the play?" Widow Tattle complains,

—"But here is never a fiend to carry him away. Besides, he has never a wooden dagger! I would not give a rush for a Vice that has not a wooden dagger, to snap at every body he meets." Whereupon, Mirth observes,—"That was the old way, gossip, when Iniquity came in like Hokos-Pokos, in a juggler's jerkin, with false skirts, like the knave of clubs." Some further light on the subject may be found in Twelfth Night, Act iv. sc. 2, note 13; and in King Richard III., Act iii. sc. 1, note 11.

The most ancient specimen of a Moral-play, known to have survived, dates as far back as the reign of Henry VI., which closed in 1461. It is entitled The Castle of Perseverance, and evinces such a degree of perfection as would naturally infer many earlier attempts in the same line. It is opened by Mundus, Belial, and Caro, descanting on their several gifts: Humanum Genus, who represents mankind, then announces himself, just born, and naked; while he is speaking, a good and a bad angel appear on his right and left, each claiming him as a follower. He prefers the bad angel, who leads him straight to Mundus; the latter orders his friends, Voluptas and Stultitia, to take him in hand. Detractio, who calls himself Backbiter, is also made one of his train, and procures him the acquaintance of Avaritia, by whom he is introduced to the other Deadly Sins: not long after, the youth meets with Luxuria, and has her for his mistress. At all this, Bad Angel exults, but Good Ange mourns, and sends Confessio to Humanum Genus, who at first repels him as having come too soon. However, with the help of Pœnitentia, Confessio at last reclaims him; and he asks where he can live in safety, and is told, in the Castle of Perseverance: so, thither he goes, being at that time, if Bad Angel may be credited, "forty winters old." The Seven Cardinal Virtues wait upon him in the Castle, with their respective counsels. Belial, after having beaten the Seven Deadly Sins for letting him escape, heads them in laying siege to the Castle; but he appeals to "the Duke that died

or rood" to defend him, and the assailants retire discomfited, being beaten "black and blue" by the roses which Charity and Patience hurl against them. As Humanum Genus is now grown "hoary and cold," and his "back ginneth to bow and bend," Avaritia worms in under the walls, and with his persuasive eloquence induces him to quit the Castle, and submit to the discipline of his new friend. No sooner has he got well skilled in the new lore, than Garcio, who stands for the rising generation, demands all his wealth, alleging that Mundus has given it to him. Presently Mors comes in for *his* turn, and makes a long speech extolling his own power: Anima, also, hastens to the spot, and invokes the aid of Misericordia; notwithstanding, Bad Angel shoulders the hero, and sets off with him for the infernal regions. Then follows a discussion in heaven, Mercy and Peace pleading for the hero, Verity and Justice against him: God sends for his soul; Peace takes it from Bad Angel, who is driven off to hell; Mercy presents it to heaven; and "the Father sitting in judgment" pronounces the sentence, which of course unfolds the moral of the performance.

From the foregoing analysis it will have been seen that the piece partakes somewhat the character of a Miracle-play. A list of the persons is given at the end, to the number of thirty-seven; and also a rude sketch of the representation, showing a castle in the centre, with a bed under it for the hero, and five scaffolds for Deus, Belial, Mundus, Caro, and Avaritia. Bad Angel is the Devil of the performance: there is no personage answering to the Vice. The authorship is unknown; but Mr. Collier thinks it was not the work of a clergyman, because the hero remarks of Invidia, one of the characters, that "in abbeys he dwelleth full oft."

The next piece to be noticed bears the title of Mind, Will, and Understanding. It is opened by Wisdom, who represents the second Person of the Trinity, and is dressed in rich purple, with a beard of gold, and an imperial crown on

his head set with precious stones; "in his left hand a ball of gold with a cross thereupon, and in his right hand a regal sceptre." Anima soon joins him "as a maid, in white cloth of gold gaily purfled with minever, a mantle of black thereupon;" and they converse upon heavenly love, the seven sacraments, the five senses, and reason. Mind, Will, and Understanding then describe their several qualities; the Five Wits, attired as Virgins, go out singing; Lucifer enters "in a Devil's array without, and within as proud as a gallant," that is, with a gallant's dress under his proper garb; relates the creation and fall of man, describing Mind, Will, and Understanding as the three properties of the soul, which he means to assail and corrupt. He then goes out, and presently returns "as a goodly gallant," succeeds in his attempt, and, his victims having withdrawn awhile, makes an exulting speech, at the close of which "he taketh a shrewd boy with him, and goeth his way crying;" probably snatching up a boy from amongst the spectators, — an incident designed to "bring down the house." Lucifer having gone out, his three victims return in gay apparel; they dismiss Conscience; Will dedicates himself to lust, being "as merry as a bird on bough:" all join in a song, and then proceed to have a dance. First, Mind calls in his followers: "Here enter six, disguised in the suit of Mind, with red beards, and lions rampant on their crests, and each a warder in his hand:" these answer to the names, Indignation, Sturdiness, Malice, Hastiness, Wreck, and Discord. Next, Understanding summons his adherents: "Here enter six jurors in a suite, gowned, with hoods about their heads, hats of maintenance thereupon, vizarded diversely:" their names are Wrong, Slight, Doubleness, Falseness, Ravin, and Deceit. Then come the servants of Will: "Here enter six women, three disguised as gallants, and three as matrons, with wonderful vizors correspondent:" these are called Recklessness, Idleness, Surfeit, Greediness, Spouse-breach, and Fornication. The minstrels striking up a hornpipe, they all dance togeth-

er until a quarrel breaks out between them, when the eighteen servants are driven off, their masters remaining alone on the stage. Just as these are about to withdraw for a carouse, Wisdom enters: Anima also makes her appearance, "in the most horrible wise, fouler than a fiend;" and presently gives birth to six of the Deadly Sins: "Here run out from under the horrible mantle of the Soul six small boys in the likeness of devils, and so return again." Anima thereupon perceives what a transformation has overtaken her, and Mind, Will, and Understanding learn that they are the cause of it: "Here they go out, and in the going the Soul singeth in the most lamentable wise, with drawling notes, as it is sung in the Passion-Week." Wisdom then opens his mouth in a long speech, after which, "here entereth Anima, with the Five Wits going before, Mind on the one side, and Understanding on the other side, and Will following, all in their first clothing, their chaplets and crests, and all having on crowns, singing in their coming." The three dupes of Lucifer renounce the evil of their ways, and Anima is made happy in their reformation.

The two forecited pieces have come down to our time only in manuscript. "A Goodly Interlude of Nature" is the title of a Moral-play written by Henry Medwall, chaplain to Archbishop Morton, which has descended to us in print. It is in two parts, and at the end of the first part we learn that it was played before Morton himself, who became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1486, and died in 1500. Like the two foregoing specimens, it was meant to illustrate the strife of good and evil in man, but is much superior to either of them both in construction and versification.

Mundus and Worldly-affection are represented sitting on the stage, and Man enters attended by Nature, Reason, and Innocence. Nature announces herself as God's minister on earth to instruct His creatures, and appoints Reason to guide Man in life; but, through the arts of Mundus and Sensuality, he is persuaded to dismiss Reason and Innocence to the

devil, laughing at the latter for being as mute as a Grey friar. Pride then comes in, so wrapped up in self-love that at first he does not notice Man, but afterwards engages Sensuality to insinuate him into his confidence. The result is, Man agrees that Pride shall be his companion; and, while he is gone out with Sensuality to a tavern, Pride and Worldly-affection arrange for him a fitting apparel, wherein the fashions of the time are satirized. Man now quarrels with Reason, and strikes her with his sword, for trying to keep him from going with a couple of prostitutes; after which, he soon meets with the Seven Deadly Sins, who join themselves to him under feigned names. But Man discovers ere long that he has been duped, repents his treatment of Reason, shakes off Worldly-affection, and courts Shamefastness; is reconciled to Reason, and promises to be guided by her; but his purpose is undermined by Sensuality, who tells him that Margery, one of the prostitutes, has gone stark mad for love of him, and has entered into "a religious place," meaning a house of ill fame in Southwark. Away goes Man to seek her: returning, he meets Sloth, and grows fearful that Reason is going to take him by force: a contest ensues between the parties: some of the Deadly Sins take side with him against Reason; but Gluttony declines fighting: Pride also backs out of the scrape; for which cause Man repudiates him, and is again made friends with Reason by Age. Nevertheless, he still clings to Covetise; and, the question being raised, where Covetise has dwelt so long, Sensuality remarks, — "He dwelleth with a priest, as I heard say; for he loveth well men of the Church; and lawyers eke will follow his counsel." Man then holds a conference with Reason, and makes many promises of amendment; Meekness, the enemy of Pride, enters and gives his lesson; he is followed by Charity, Patience, and other good counsellors: Abstinence and Chastity take Man away on a visit to Repentance; on his return, Reason welcomes him, and promises him salvation.

There are several other printed pieces dating from about the same period as the preceding, but so nearly like it, that the dwelling upon them would make little for our purpose. One of them is entitled The World and the Child, and represents man in the five stages of infancy, boyhood, youth, maturity, and infirmity. It was printed in 1522, but doubtless written some years before. Another of them is called Hick Scorner, and deserves mention chiefly as being perhaps the earliest specimen of a Moral-play, in which some attempt is made at individual character. The piece is somewhat remarkable, also, in having been such a popular favourite, that the phrase "Hick Scorner's jests" grew into use as a proverb, to signify the profane scurrility with which the Puritans treated the Scriptures in the reign of Elizabeth.

"The Necromancer, a Moral Interlude and a pithy, written by Master Skelton, Laureate, and played before the King and other estates at Woodstock on Palm-Sunday," came from the press in 1504. The piece is now lost; but a copy of it belonging to Collins was seen by Warton, who gave an account of it; which, as it is very curious, we must add in a condensed form. The persons are a Necromancer or Conjurer, the Devil, a Notary Public, Simony, and Avarice. The plot is the trial of Simony and Avarice, the Devil being the judge, and the Notary Public serving as assessor or scribe: the Conjurer has little to do but open the subject in a long prologue, evoke the Devil, and summon the court. The prisoners are found guilty, and ordered off straight to hell: the Devil kicks the Conjurer for waking him too early in the morning: Avarice quotes Seneca and St. Augustine; and Simony tries to bribe the Devil: he rejects her offer with indignation, and swears by the Furies and the hoary head of Charon, that she shall be well roasted in the sulphur of Cocytus, along with Mahomet, Pilate, Judas, and Herod. The last scene presents a view of Hell, and a dance between the Devil and the Conjurer; at the close of which the Devil trips up his partner's heels, and disappears in fire and smoke.

A variety of measures, with shreds of Latin and French, is used; but the Devil speaks in the octave stanza. The piece seems to have been intended partly as a satire on some abuses in the Church; which matter, however, is conducted with proper decorum and respect.

Another piece of Skelton's, entitled Magnificence, and designed to set forth the vanity of worldly grandeur, has survived in print, but the edition is undated. Magnificence, the hero, being eaten out of substance by his friends and retainers, falls into the hands of Poverty and Adversity: in this state, he meets with Despair and Mischief; these furnish him with a knife and halter; he is about killing himself when Good-hope steps in and stays his arm: Redress, Circumspection, and Perseverance then take him in hand, wean him from the love of his former state, and make him content to live in an humbler sphere. The most notable feature of the thing is, that comic incident and dialogue are somewhat made use of, to diversify and enliven the serious parts; thus showing the early disposition to weave tragedy and comedy together in one dramatic web. On one occasion, Fancy and Folly get to playing tricks on Crafty-conveyance: he is induced to lay a wager that Folly will not be able to laugh him out of his coat: the feat is accomplished in a manner rather laughable, but too indelicate for quotation.

The Moral-play of Every-man was printed some time before 1531. Though closely resembling The Castle of Perseverance, the allegory is managed with so much skill, as to entitle it to some special notice. It opens with a soliloquy by the Deity, lamenting that the people forsake Him for the Seven Deadly Sins. He then summons Death, and sends him after Every-man, the hero of the piece, who stands for the whole human race. Death finds him, delivers the message, and tells him to bring with him his account-book; but allows him to prove his friends. First, he tries Fellowship, who, though ready to murder any one for his sake, declines going with him on his long journey. Next, he tries Kin-

dred, who excuses himself as having "the cramp in his toe." Then he applies to Riches, who also gives him the cold shoulder. At last, he resorts to Good-deeds, and finds her too weak to stand; but she points out to him the blank in his book of works. However, she introduces him to Knowledge, who takes him to Confession: there he meets with Strength, Discretion, Beauty, and Five Wits, who undertake to go with him. Arriving at the brink of the grave, he calls on his friends to enter it with him. First, Beauty refuses, then Strength, then Discretion, then Five Wits; even Knowledge deserts him; Good-deeds alone having the virtue to stick by him.

Considering the religious origin of the English Drama, it had been something wonderful if, when controversies arose, different sides had not used it in furtherance of their views. We have seen that in the reign of Henry VIII. Bishop Bale wrote Miracle-plays for the avowed purpose of advancing the Reformation; and that his plays were printed abroad in 1538. The reason of which printing abroad was, no doubt, that a royal proclamation had been set forth some years before, forbidding any plays to be performed, or any books printed, in the English tongue, touching matters then in controversy, unless the same had first been allowed by public authority. The King, however, was not at all averse to the stage being made use of against the Reformers; the purpose of that measure being, so far as regarded plays, to prevent any using of them on the other side. For in the fall of 1528 the French Ambassadors were entertained with great splendour, first by Cardinal Wolsey at Hampton Court, and afterwards by the King at Greenwich. Cavendish, in his Life of Wolsey, winds up an account of the latter entertainment as follows: "After all this, there was the most goodliest disguising or interlude, made in Latin and French, whose apparel was of such exceeding richness, that it passeth my capacity to expound." Mr. Collier publishes a very curious description of the performance, from Richard

Gibson, then an officer in the King's household: showing that this interlude was a Latin Moral-play wherein "the heretic Luther" and his wife were brought on the stage. It was acted by the children of St. Paul's under the care of their master, John Rightwise, who probably wrote the piece.

Another curious matter touching the point in hand has turned up in the shape of a letter to Cromwell from a person calling himself Thomas Willey, Vicar of Yoxford, in Suffolk. The letter is undated, but the address shows it to have been written between 1535 and 1540. The following is the material part of it:

"The Lord make you the instrument of my help, Lord Cromwell, that I may have free liberty to preach the truth.

"I dedicate and offer to your Lordship A Reverent Receiving of the Sacrament, as a Lenten matter, declared by six children, representing Christ, the Word of God, Paul, Austin, a Child, a Nun called Ignorancy; as a secret thing that shall have its end, once rehearsed afore your eye by the said children. The most part of the priests of Suffolk will not receive me into their churches to preach, but have disdained me ever since I made a play against the Pope's counsellors. I have made a play called A Rude Commonalty. I am making of another called The Woman of the Rock, in the fire of faith a fining, and a purging in the true purgatory; never to be seen but of your Lordship's eye."

In 1543, an Act of Parliament was passed for the restraining of dramatic performances. The preamble states that divers persons, intending to subvert the true and perfect doctrine of Scripture, after their perverse fantasies, have taken upon them not only to teach the same by sermons and arguments, but also by printed books, plays, and songs; and the body of the statute enacts that no person shall play in interludes, sing, or rhyme any matter contrary to the Church of Rome; the penalty being, a fine of £10 and three months' imprisonment for the first offence for the second

forfeiture of all goods and perpetual imprisonment. A proviso, however, is added in favour of songs, plays, and interludes having for their object "the rebuking and reproaching of vices, and the setting forth of virtue; so always the said songs, plays, or interludes meddle not with the interpretations of Scripture."

The same year, one Edward Stalbridge printed abroad "The Epistle Exhortatory of an English Christian to his dearly-beloved Country," which has the following, addressed to the Romanists, and evidently referring to the forecited statute: "None leave ye unvexed and untroubled, — no, not so much as the poor minstrels, and players of interludes, but ye are doing with them. So long as they played lies, and sang bawdy songs, blasphemed God, and corrupted men's consciences, ye never blamed them, but were very well contented. But since they persuaded the people to worship their Lord God aright, according to His holy laws, and not yours, and to acknowledge Jesus Christ for their only Redeemer and Saviour, without your lousy legerdemains, ye never were pleased with them."

When Edward VI. came to the throne, in 1547, legislation took a new turn: the Act of 1543 was repealed. Holinshed gives a fine account how the Christmas of 1551 was passed at Court. "It was devised," says he, "that the feast of Christ's nativity should be solemnly kept at Greenwich, with open household and frank resort to Court, what time, of old ordinary course, there is always one appointed to make sport in the Court, called commonly Lord of Misrule; whose office is not unknown to such as have been brought up in noblemen's houses, and among great housekeepers, which use liberal feasting in that season. There was, therefore, by order of the Council, a wise gentleman and learned, named George Ferrers, appointed to that office for this year; who, being of better credit and estimation than commonly his predecessors had been, received all his warrants by the name of the Master of the King's Pastimes. Which gen-

tleman so well supplied his office, both in show of sundry sights, and in act of divers interludes, as not only satisfied the common sort, but also were very well liked by the Council, and others of skill in the like pastimes; but best of all by the young King himself, as appeared by his princely liberality in rewarding that service." There arose, however, so great an excess on the part of printers and players, that in the spring of 1552 a strong proclamation was issued, forbidding them to print or play any thing without a special licence under the sign manual, or under the hands of six of the Privy Council, the penalty being imprisonment without bail or mainprise, and fine at the King's pleasure.

Soon after the accession of Mary, in 1553, was set forth "a proclamation for reformation of busy meddlers in matters of religion, and for redress of preachers, printers, and players." So much of it as relates to the subject in hand is as follows: "Forasmuch as it is well known, that sedition and false rumours have been nourished and maintained within this realm, by playing of interludes and printing of false fond books, ballads, and other lewd treatises in the English tongue, concerning doctrine in matters now in question and controversy; her Highness therefore straitly chargeth all and every her subjects, that none of them presume from henceforth to print any books, ballad, interlude or treatise, nor to play any interlude, except they have her Grace's special licence in writing for the same, upon pain to incur her highness' indignation and displeasure."

The practical intent of this order of course was, to prevent the printing or playing of any thing adapted to further the Reformation. And for more than two years it seems to have been effectual for that end; after which, further measures were found necessary. In February, 1556, the Privy Council directed Lord Rich to stop the performance of a stage-play that was to take place at Hatfield-Bradock, in Essex, and to ascertain who the players should be, and what the effect of the play. Soon after, as the players were

found to be "honest householders and quiet persons," he was ordered to set them at liberty, but to have special care for preventing the like occasions in future. In the spring following, the Earl of Shrewsbury being President of the North, the Council wrote to him, complaining that "certain lewd persons, naming themselves to be servants unto Sir Francis Leek, had wandered about those north parts, and represented certain plays and interludes containing very naughty and seditious matter touching the state of the realm, and to the slander of Christ's true and catholic religion." For which cause, they required the Earl to search for the players without delay, and to punish them as vagabonds, on a repetition of the offence. This was evidently aimed for the suppression of all plays in the interest of the Protestant cause. Still it seems not to have been enough, for it was soon followed by an order from the Star Chamber to the justices of the peace in every county, requiring that all dramatic performances should be stopped.

All would not do; the restraints kept giving way to the pressure. In June, 1557, "certain naughty plays" broke loose even in London: the Lord Mayor was called upon by the Court to discover and arrest the players, and "to take order that no play be made henceforth within the city, except the same be first seen, and the players authorised." In the same month, the Mayor of Canterbury arrested some players within his jurisdiction, and was required by the Council to detain them until further orders. Meanwhile, "their lewd play-book" was taken in hand by the crown lawyers, and in August a letter was written to the Mayor, ordering him to proceed against the players forthwith, and to punish them according to their offences. In 1557, the magistrates of Essex, it seems, were not energetic and prompt enough in this matter; for which cause they were straitly admonished by the Privy Council to carry into immediate execution the Star Chamber order of 1556.

Nevertheless, Queen Mary was far from discouraging

plays and players: on the contrary, she kept up the theatrical and musical establishment of her father, at a cost, in salaries only, of between £2000 and £3000 a year, besides board, liveries, and incidental expenses. The old Miracle-plays, being generally of the right Roman Catholic stamp, were revived under the fostering patronage of the Court. In 1556, the play of Christ's Passion was presented at the Greyfriars in London, before the Lord Mayor, the Privy Council, and many great estates of the realm. The next year, it was repeated at the same place; and also, on the feast of St. Olave, the miraculous life of that Saint was performed as a stage-play in the church dedicated to him.

Elizabeth succeeded to the crown, November 17th, 1558; and in May following she set forth a proclamation forbidding any plays or interludes to be performed in the kingdom without special licence from the local magistrates; and also ordering that none should be so licenced, wherein either matters of religion or of state were handled. This was probably deemed necessary in consequence of the strong measures which had lately been used for putting down all plays that smacked anyway of the Reformation. A good comment on the action of the crown in this particular is furnished by a letter from Sir Robert Dudley, afterwards Earl of Leicester, to Shrewsbury, then Lord President of the North. Sir Robert had at that time a company of players acting under his name; the letter was written in their behalf, and dated from Westminster, June, 1559:

"My good Lord: Whereas my servants, bringers hereof unto you, be such as are players of interludes; and for the same have the licence of divers of my Lords here, under their seals and hands, to play in divers shires within the realm under their authorities, as may amply appear unto your Lordship by the same licence; I have thought, among the rest, by my letters to beseech your good Lordship, that they may have your hand and seal to their licence, for the like liberty in Yorkshire; being honest men. and such as

shall play none other matters, I trust, but tolerable and convenient, whereof some have been heard here already before divers of my Lords. For whom I shall have good cause to thank your Lordship, and to remain your Lordship's to the best that shall lie in my little power. And thus I take my leave of your good Lordship."

All which may suffice to indicate how matters stood in regard of what is now to be noticed.

The Moral-play of Lusty Juventus, written in the reign of Edward VI., and printed sometime after 1551, is full of shots at what are called the superstitions of Rome. Its arguments and positions are exceedingly scriptural, chapter and verse being quoted or referred to with all the exactness of a sermon or a theological discourse. And the tenets of the new "gospellers" are as openly maintained, as those of Rome are impugned. Juventus, the hero, is decidedly bent on "going it while he is young," and starts out in quest of his companions, to have a merry dance: Good Counsel meets him, warns him of the evils of his ways, and engages him on the spot in a prayer for grace to aid him in his purpose of amendment. Just at this moment Knowledge comes up, and, chiefly by expounding to him the doctrine of justification by faith, prevails on him to spend his time mostly in hearing sermons and reading the Scriptures. This puts the Devil in great alarm; he has a soliloquy on the subject; then calls in his son Hypocrisy, and engages his services in the cause. While Juventus is on his way to "hear a preaching," Hypocrisy encounters him, argues with him against forsaking the traditions of his fathers, and, by promising him Abominable-living for a mistress, diverts him from his purpose. Some while after, Good Counsel finds him in the lowest state of debauchery, and reclaims him; and God's Merciful Promises undertakes to procure his pardon.

The Interlude of Youth, written and printed in the time of Mary, strikes as decidedly the other way, and with much

more skill of execution. It begins with a speech by Charity in praise of the virtue he represents. Just then Youth enters in a very youthful state of mind; Charity tries to sober him, but presently retires; and Riot comes in, having escaped from the gallows by breaking the rope: Riot introduces Youth to Pride; Pride recommends his sister Lechery to him for a mistress; they are about going to the tavern, when Charity returns, and tries to restrain them, but they bind him with a chain: Humility comes to his rescue; and there they all have a long debate together, Charity and Humility urging Youth to virtue, Riot and Pride instigating him to all kinds of vice. Charity explains to him how Christ hath bought all mankind "on the rood," and the theme works so strongly that Riot and Pride strive in vain to counterwork it. A mutual repudiation follows between them and Youth; the latter is perfectly reclaimed, and is assured by Charity that he shall be "an heritor of bliss."

"The longer thou livest the more Fool thou art," is the title of a very amusing piece, by W. Wager, which was probably written early in Elizabeth's reign, though the exact date cannot be fixed, either of the writing or the printing. Its moral turns on the education of children. Moros, the hero, is represented in the outset as an ignorant and vicious fool, thinking of nothing but ballads and songs, and constantly singing scraps of them: Discipline finds him venting this humour, and reproves his lightness; Piety and Exercitation add their efforts, to reform him, but discover that he has as much knave as fool about him. The two latter hold him, while Discipline lays on the whip, till he affects contrition; but he is soon wheedled into a relapse by Idleness, Incontinence, and Wrath, who, however, profess to hold him in contempt; Wrath calling him "as stark an idiot as ever bore bauble," but giving him the Vice's sword and dagger; while all promise him the society of Nell, Nan, Meg, and Bess. Being left alone, at the sight of Discipline Moros drops his sword and hides himself. Fortune then endows

him with wealth; he takes Impiety, Cruelty, and Ignorance into his service, and "disguises himself gaily in a foolish beard;" Impiety stirs him up against "these new fellows," meaning the Protestants, and he vows to "hang, burn, head and kill" them without remorse; Discipline returns, and he flees, not having courage enough to use his sword and dagger. When they are gone, People enters, and complains of the hero's cruelty and oppression, but runs off in a fright, on his returning "furiously with a grey beard." God's Judgment then comes "with a terrible vizard," and strikes him down; Confusion follows; they strip off his "goodly gear," and put on him a fool's coat. Being threatened by Confusion with eternal fire, and required to go with him, he replies, —

> "Go with thee, ill-favour'd knave?
> I had liefer thou wert hang'd by the neck:
> If it please the Devil me to have,
> Let him carry me away on his back."

We are left to infer that Confusion, who is the Devil of the piece, takes him at his word.

The Conflict of Conscience, by Nathaniel Woods, Minister of Norwich, was written about the same time as the foregoing, though not printed till 1581. A brief analysis will show its pertinency to the great question of the time; besides, it is worthy of notice as being one of the earliest germinations of the Historical Drama. The hero, though called Philologus, is avowedly meant for Francis Speira, an Italian lawyer who, it is said, "forsook the truth of God's Gospel for fear of the loss of life and worldly goods." He committed suicide in 1548, and his fate soon became notorious in England. The characters of the piece are partly real, partly allegorical: among the former, are Speira, his two sons, and Cardinal Eusebius; among the latter, Conscience, Hypocrisy, Tyranny, Spirit, Avarice, Horror, and Sensual-suggestion. Philologus is represented as a rich and zealous patron of the Reformation: Tyranny has orders

from Rome to search for heretics, Hypocrisy and Avarice to aid him in the search; Caconos, a Romish priest, directs them to the hero's house; he is summoned before the Cardinal, and holds his ground till threatened with prison and torture, when, urged by Sensual-suggestion, he returns to popery. He then has an interview with his sons, during which Spirit, Conscience, and Horror assail him, and the Cardinal comes with Theologus to console him: he refuses to hear them, and rushes out: a Nuntius then informs the audience, that after thirty weeks of suffering and despair he had hanged himself.

The Marriage of Wit and Science deserves mention, both for reasons that will presently appear, and also as the first known instance of a Moral-play regularly distributed into five Acts, and these again into scenes. Master Wit, the son of Nature, is deeply smitten with Lady Science, daughter of Reason and Experience; he wishes to take her to his bosom in marriage forthwith, but is told by his mother Nature that she is only to be won by labour and perseverance; however, she bids him try his fortune, and lets him have Will as a servant. Will is in much alarm at the thought of his young master's being married, and warns him to break his wife in betimes, whoever she may be. The lady is retiring and shy, like Milton's Eve, "that would be woo'd, and not unsought be won;" nevertheless, in obedience to her parents, she accepts a portrait of Wit, and consents to listen his suit. Wit comes; Reason introduces him to Instruction; the latter has two servants, Study and Diligence, who are also of the party; and Science engages to become the bride of Wit, when he shall have spent three or four years under their tuition; though she requires him, as her knight, first to slay Tediousness, a huge giant that has vowed himself her deadly foe. Wit encounters him with too little circumspection, and gets a blow that lays him in a trance however, Recreation comes to his aid, recovers him, and diets him with music till he fairly dances with life. When

he is something wearied with this exercise, Idleness and Ignorance take him in hand, and the former invites him into her lap, and "sings a song that pleases him, and on his eye-lids crowns the god of sleep;" a part of it being as follows:

> "Come, come, and ease thee in my lap,
> And, if it please thee, take a nap;
> A nap that shall delight thee so,
> That fancies all will thee forgo.
> By musing still, what canst thou find
> But wants of will and restless mind?
> A mind that mars and mangles all,
> And breedeth jars to work thy fall.
> Come, gentle Wit, I thee require,
> And thou shalt hit thy chief desire,
> Thy chief desire and hoped prey;
> First ease thee here, and then away."

While he is asleep, the sirens put on him a fool's dress, so that Reason and Science on seeing him cut his acquaintance. Wit is not aware of his disguise till he sees himself in a looking-glass which Reason had given him: Shame then takes him in hand, and applies the scourge till Science interposes; he repents, is restored to favour; aided by Instruction, Study, and Diligence, he again encounters the giant in the eye of his lady-love; has some hard fighting, but at last whips me off his head, and presents it to Science. The piece concludes with the marriage of the lovers, Reason, Experience, Instruction, Study, and Diligence rejoicing at the match, and even Will taking a sort of sneaking pleasure in it.

The play, as may be gathered from this analysis, conveys an excellent moral: the allegory, too, is managed with considerable skill; and there is something of humour in the execution, and of melody in the versification. The old copy is undated, but the piece was licenced between July, 1569, and July, 1570.

The play of "Like will to Like, quoth the Devil to the Collier, very godly, and full of pleasant mirth," was written

by Ulpian Fulwell, and printed in 1568. Here, again, we meet with some rude approaches to individual character; which is our chief reason for mentioning the piece. Nichol Newfangle, though in fact the hero, enacts the Vice, and is armed with the wooden dagger: among his friends are Ralph Royster, Tom Tosspot, Philip Fleming, Pierce Pickpurse, and Cuthbert Cutpurse, who have some lines of individual peculiarity. To these are added several allegorical personages, as Good Fame, Severity, Virtuous Life, God's Promise, and Honour. Lucifer also figures in the piece, with "his name written on his back and breast;" and Newfangle claims him for his God-father, adding that he has served an apprenticeship under him, and thus learnt all the sciences that minister to pride. The Collier comes in with empty sacks, owning that he has sold three pecks for a bushel; Newfangle introduces him to the Devil; and the three have a dance to the tune of "Tom Collier of Croydon hath sold his coal." Royster and Tosspot get drunk, and wade in debauchery, but finally repent; Pickpurse and Cutpurse are betrayed by Newfangle, and taken away with halters about their necks; Virtuous Life is crowned by Honour; Newfangle is carried off by the Devil; so that justice is done all round.

If The Conflict of Conscience deserves mention as an approach towards Tragedy, Tom Tiler and his Wife is equally entitled to notice as an early sprout of Comedy. It contains a mixture of allegorical and individual persons, the latter, however, taking the chief part of the action. The opening is made by "a sage person" called Destiny, and the Vice, named Desire; from their talk it appears that Destiny has married Tom Tiler to a lady named Strife, with whom he leads a very wretched life, she being not only a scold, but hugely given to drinking with Sturdy and Tipple. Tiler meets his friend Tom Tailor, an artificer of shreds and patches, and relates his sufferings; Tailor proposes to change clothes with him; in this disguise, goes to Strife as her hus

band, and gives her such a drubbing, that she submits, and betakes herself to the bed. Tiler then gets his own clothes again, goes home, and pities his wife: she, ignorant of the trick, vows she can never love him again: to regain her favour, he unwarily tells her the truth; whereupon she snatches a stick, and belabours him till he cries out for his life, and she declares that Tom Tailor had better have eaten her than beaten her. Tiler flies to his friend Tailor, relates what has happened, and the cause of it; for which Tailor insults and strikes him right before Destiny. Strife, coming up just then, plays her batteries against them both, until Patience arrives and composes all differences, taking the discontent out of Tiler, and the fury out of Strife.

"A new Interlude for Children to play, named Jack Juggler, both witty and very pleasant," is somewhat remarkable, not only in that it carries still higher the effort at individual character, but as being one of the oldest pieces founded on a classic original; the author claiming, in his prologue, to have taken "Plautus' first comedy" as his model. Master Bongrace sends his lackey, Jenkin Careaway, to Dame Coy, his lady-love; but Jenkin loiters to play at dice and steal apples. Jack Juggler, who enacts the Vice, from mere love of mischief watches him, gets on some clothes just like his, and undertakes to persuade him "that he is not himself, but another man." The task proves too much for him, till at length he brings fist-arguments to bear; when Jenkin frankly gives up the point, and makes a comical address to the audience, alleging certain reasons for believing that he is not himself. The humour of the piece — and there is considerable in it — turns mainly on this doubt of his identity. His blunders get him into disgrace with Dame Coy, who even goes so far as to bestow "a cudgel-blessing" on him; so that he is reasoned out of his mispersuasion by much the same arguments as brought him into it. Besides the lines of character, the piece has considerable liveliness of dialogue, and Alice Trip-and-go, a smart maid-servant of Dame Coy,

is described by Jack Juggler in a very natural and effective manner.

There are many other pieces of the same class, but it would be overworking our point, to dwell upon them. We will dismiss this branch of the subject with a very curious account, by Stephen Gosson, of a Moral-play that seems to have perished. In 1579, Gosson published a book entitled "The School of Abuse, containing a Pleasant Invective against Poets, Pipers, Players, Jesters, and such-like Caterpillars of the Commonwealth." To offset this attack, it seems, a piece called The Play of Plays was soon after written and performed. Two or three years later, Gosson put forth a tract with the title of Plays Confuted in Five Actions, in which occurs the following:

"The author of The Play of Plays, spreading out his battle to hem me in, is driven to take so large a compass, that his array is the thinner, and therefore the easier to be broken. He tieth Life and Delight so fast together, that if Delight be restrained Life presently perisheth: there Zeal, perceiving Delight to be embraced of Life, puts a snaffle in his mouth to keep him under: Delight being bridled, Zeal leadeth Life through a wilderness of loathsomeness, where Glut scareth them all, chasing both Zeal and Delight from Life, and with the club of amazedness strikes such a peg into the head of Life, that he falls down for dead upon the stage.

"Life being thus faint and overtravelled, destitute of his guide, robbed of Delight, is ready to give up the ghost in the same place: then entereth Recreation, which with music and singing rocks Life asleep, to recover his strength. By this means Tediousness is driven from Life, and the taint is drawn out of his head, which the club of amazedness left behind.

"At last Recreation setteth up the gentleman upon his feet, Delight is restored to him again, and such kind of sports, for cullises, are brought in to nourish him, as none but Delight must apply to his stomach. Then, time being

made for the benefit of Life, and Life being allowed to follow his appetite amongst all manner of pastimes, Life chooseth comedies for his delight; partly because comedies are neither chargeable to the beholder's purse, nor painful to his body; partly because he may sit out of the rain to view the same, when many other pastimes are hindered by weather. Zeal is no more admitted to Life before he be somewhat pinched in the waist, to avoid extremity, and being not in the end simply called Zeal, but Moderate Zeal: a few conditions are prescribed to comedies; that the matter be purged, deformities blazed, sin rebuked, honest mirth intermingled, and fit time for the hearing of the same appointed. Moderate Zeal is contented to suffer them, who joineth with Delight to direct Life again, after which he triumphs over Death, and is crowned with eternity."

CHAPTER III.

THEATRICAL COMPANIES.

We have seen that the English Drama took its origin in the Church. Doubtless it was for a long time mainly in the hands of the Clergy, themselves acting in the performances, or at least superintending them. At what time play-acting began to be followed as a distinct profession, is not known. Companies of travelling actors, it seems, were not uncommon as far back as the time of Henry VI.; the Castle of Perseverance being represented by persons of that sort, who, on reaching a populous district, sent forward messengers to give notice when and where the performance would take place. Early in the next reign, 1464, an Act of Parliament was passed, regulating the apparel of different orders, but making a special exception in favour of certain classes

among whom "players of interludes" are mentioned. This is said to be the first statute of the realm, in which any such notice occurs. During the same reign, the private account-book of Lord John Howard, afterwards Duke of Norfolk, mentions several companies of players, as those of Cocksale, Chelmsford, and Lavenham, who were probably sets of actors hailing from those places, but sometimes going abroad in the exercise of their mystery. From the same source we learn that the Duke of Gloucester, afterwards Richard III., had a company of players in his patronage, and acting under his name.

It is pretty certain that in the reign of Henry VII., which began in 1485, dramatic exhibitions were common in all parts of the kingdom. The Exchequer accounts of the reign show in one place an annuity of £13 6*s.* 8*d.* "to Richard Gibson and other the King's players." And when the King's eldest daughter, Margaret, was sent into Scotland on her marriage with James IV., a company of players, John English being one of them, formed a part of her retinue. Prince Arthur was born in 1486; and some time after, another company entitled "the Prince's players," were required to do their share towards the amusement of the Court. In addition to these, the Gentlemen of the Chapel acted before the King and Court during the festivities of Christmas, and had rewards as "the players of the Chapel." It appears, also, from the accounts of the Queen, that, besides the three sets of actors belonging to the royal household, the players of the Duke of Buckingham, and of the Earls of Oxford, Essex, and Northumberland, performed at Court, and were variously rewarded. And we learn from the same authority, that there were companies of players attached to London, Coventry, Wycomb, Mile-end, Wymborn, and Kingston. And another book of the Queen's expenses shows that she sometimes made separate rewards to players when they gave her unusual satisfaction. In short, before the end of this reign, in 1509, acting had become an ordinary vocation

still, notwithstanding the patronage of the King and the nobility, it seems not to have been considered a reputable pursuit.

For some few years, Henry VIII. merely kept up the theatrical establishment of his father; but in 1514 a new company was taken into his service, and in the entries of payments after that time we have the distinction of "the King's players" and "the King's old players." The Gentlemen of the Chapel continued to perform, their pay being increased from £6 13*s.* 4*d.* to £10. The children of the Chapel also performed from time to time as a band of comedians, receiving a gratuity of £6 13*s.* 4*d.* John Heywood, then called "the singer," but whom we shall meet with hereafter in a different capacity, had a quarterly allowance of £5. From a curious paper printed by Mr. Collier, it appears that during the Christmas of 1514–15 two interludes were played before the Court at Richmond, one by the children of the Chapel under the care of William Cornish, the other by the King's players, with John English at their head. We subjoin the account of them:

"The interlude was called The Triumph of Love and Beauty, and it was written and presented by Master Cornish and others of the Chapel of our sovereign lord the King, and the children of the said Chapel. In the same, Venus and Beauty did triumph over all their enemies, and tamed a savage man and a lion; that was made very rare and natural, so as the King was greatly pleased therewith, and graciously gave Master Cornish a rich reward out of his own hand, to be divided with the rest of his fellows. Venus did sing a song with Beauty, which was greatly liked of all that heard it. — English and the others of the King's players after played an interlude which was written by Master Medwal; but it was so long, it was not liked: it was of the finding of Truth, who was carried away by Ignorance and Hypocrisy. The Fool's part was the best, but the King departed before the end to his chamber."

In 1520, four French hostages having been left in England for the performance of a treaty touching the surrender of Tournay, the King had his great chamber at Greenwich staged for their entertainment; and Holinshed tells us that, among other things, "there was a goodly comedy of Plautus played." This is one of the earliest signs of any thing like a classical taste in such matters. The play, being meant for foreigners, was probably acted in the original Latin, as there is no trace of any English version from Plautus of so early a date. In the Christmas of 1527, a play was acted at Gray's Inn; which is the first known instance of such a performance by that society; but as the play was written by one of the members some twenty years before, acting was probably not then a new thing with them. We learn from Hall that Cardinal Wolsey was present on the occasion; and that "this play was so set forth, with rich and costly apparel, that it was highly praised of all men, saving the Cardinal, which imagined the play had been devised of him." The consequence was, Wolsey had the author and "one of the young gentlemen that played" sent to the Fleet: however, they were soon released, it being found that the play had been misunderstood, and that it was written before Wolsey became Cardinal.

Of players acting under the special patronage of individuals in this reign, besides those already mentioned, we hear of companies attached to the Queen, the Duke of Suffolk, the Lord Warden, the Earls of Wiltshire and Derby, Cardinal Wolsey, Lord Fitzwater, and others. Notices also occur of companies belonging to Chester and Suffolk. And it appears that all the companies, from the King's downwards, were used to travel about the country, holding exhibitions wherever they could make profits. We learn from the book of regulations used in the Northumberland family, and drawn up by the Earl in 1512, that the rewards given to noblemen's players varied with the rank of their patrons those of an Earl receiving 20*s*., while those of a Baron had but half that sum.

We have already shown enough of what was done by royal proclamation and parliamentary enactment during this reign, for the ordering and restraining of theatrical performances. But it seems proper to add, that from a very early date the Corporation of London was decidedly hostile to the stage. Regulations had been adapted for suppressing it within the City limits; but in 1543 some players acting under the Lord Warden's patronage broke through those orders, and, on complaint to the Privy Council, were sent to the Counter.

Hitherto the person having charge of the King's theatricals was called "the Abbot of Misrule," or "the Lord of Misrule," but in 1546 a patent was granted to Sir Thomas Cawarden, who had long been a gentleman of the privy chamber, creating him Master of the Revels for life. The office, however, both name and thing, had for some time been established in the Northumberland family. The King's Master of the Revels had at first a salary of £10; and there was, under him, a Yeoman of the Revels with a salary of £9 2*s.* 6*d.*

The reigns of Edward VI. and Queen Mary offer nothing of particular consequence touching the growth of theatrical companies. The royal establishment of revels seems to have continued in all material respects much the same as in the preceding reign. How important and operative an institution the Drama was getting to be, is manifest enough from the forecited acts of public authority during this period in regard to it.

We have already seen that in 1559, the first year of Elizabeth, Sir Robert Dudley had a set of players under his patronage; and that he took care that his name should not be to them an empty honour. This is the first that we hear of the company which afterwards, as will in due time appear, outshone all others.

The Cottonian manuscripts note a remarkable circumstance among the events of Christmas, 1559: "The same

day at night, at the Queen's Court, there was a play afore her Grace, in which the players played such matter that they were commanded to leave off." But it seems the disturbance did not last long; for the same authority informs us that on Twelfth-day following a scaffold for the play was set up in the hall, and that the play was succeeded by "a goodly masque, and, after, a great banquet that lasted till midnight."

Two years later, the Christmas season appears to have been kept with unusual splendour. On the 18th of January, the manuscripts just quoted mention "a play in the Queen's hall at Westminster by the gentlemen of the Temple; after, a great masque, for there was a great scaffold in the hall, with great triumph as has been seen; and the morrow the scaffold was taken down." This play was the tragedy of Gorboduc, which we shall see more of hereafter; and the title-page of the old edition states that it was "showed before the Queen's most excellent Majesty, in her Highness' Court of Whitehall, the 18th of January, 1562, by the gentlemen of the Inner Temple." The 1st of February following, another play was acted, called Julius Cæsar, which is the earliest known instance of an English play founded on Roman history.

It appears that under Elizabeth the Revels establishment was at first conducted on a much more economical scale than in the time of her father and sister. Nevertheless, we learn from the Lansdowne papers that the whole cost of the establishment during the fourth year of her reign was upwards of £1230; of which £30 were for eight "players of interludes."

In 1563, the nation was ravaged by a malignant infectious fever, called the plague, brought over by the English troops from Holland; and Camden states that no less than 21,530 persons died of it in London: it was the same, no doubt, that in 1564 was so fearfully busy around the cradle of the infant Shakespeare. Archbishop Grindal made this scourge

an occasion for trying to put down the stage: his action is thus recorded by Strype: "The players he called an idle sort of people, which had been infamous in all good commonwealths. These men did then daily, but especially on holidays, set up their bills inviting to plays, and the youth resorted excessively to them, and there took infection. He complained to the Secretary that God's word was profaned by their impure mouths, and turned into scoffs. And, by search, he perceived there was no one thing of late more like to have renewed the infection, there being such vast resort thither. And therefore he advised, for the remedy hereof, that Cecil would be the means of a proclamation to inhibit all plays for one whole year; and if it were forever, added he, it were not amiss: that is, within the City or three miles compass, upon pains, as well to the player, as to the owners of houses where they played their lewd interludes." We do not hear of any action being taken in pursuance of this advice, but it is quite probable that some temporary restraint was imposed. At all events, the matter is pertinent as showing the growing importance of the stage.

From "a brief estimate of all the charges against Christmas and Candlemas for three plays at Windsor," in the Christmas season of 1563–64, and also for plays at the Christmas and Shrovetide following, it appears that the cost of the whole was a little over £444. This includes, however, the "repairing and making of three masques, with their whole furniture and divers devices, and a castle for ladies, and a harbour for lords," shown before the Queen and the French Ambassadors at Richmond in the summer of 1564; but it was only a small part of the expenses incurred on those occasions. From the same paper we learn that Richard Edwards was the author of a play acted before the Queen at Christmas, 1564, by the children of the Chapel, Edwards being at that time their master. During the festivities of the following Twelfthtide, the boys belonging to the grammar-school of Westminster, and the children of

Paul's performed at Court. In the summer of 1564, the Queen, being then on a progress, visited Cambridge University, and was entertained at King's College with a play "called Ezechias in English:" it was made by Nicholas Udall, of whom more hereafter, and of course was a sacred drama, founded on the Second Book of Kings.

On the 3d of September, 1566, a play was witnessed by Elizabeth at Oxford, when she gave eight guineas to one of the young performers. Anthony Wood furnishes the following account of it: "At night the Queen heard the first part of an English play named Palamon and Arcite, made by Mr. Richard Edwards, a gentleman of her Chapel, acted with very great applause in Christ Church Hall; at the beginning of which play there was, by part of the stage which fell, three persons slain, besides five that were hurt. Afterwards, the actors performed their parts so well, that the Queen laughed heartily thereat, and gave the author of the play great thanks for his pains." Two days later, a Latin play called Progne, by Dr. James Calfhill, was acted; but, according to Wood, "it did not take half so well as the much-admired play of Palamon and Arcite." During the next Christmas season, the Revels were held at Gray's Inn, where Gascoigne's Supposes, translated from Ariosto, and his Jocasta, from Euripides, were performed. The former was a prose comedy, traces of which are found in Shakespeare's Taming of the Shrew; the latter, a tragedy in blank verse.

Mr. Collier found among the Harleian manuscripts a minute account of the Court theatricals in 1568: it shows the payment of £634 9*s.* 5*d.* for expenses incurred between July, 1567, and March following; during which time eight plays were acted before the Queen; the titles of which are given as follows: As Plain as can be; The Painful Pilgrimage Jack and Gill; Six Fools; Wit and Will; Prodigality; Orestes; The King of Scots; none of which appear to have survived. The same paper shows the sum of £453 5*s.* 5*d.* spent for Court theatricals in 1569; but only states, gen-

erally, that "plays, tragedies, and masques" were performed at Christmas and Shrovetide. From another paper, found by Malone in the Office of the Auditors of the Imprest, we learn that the cost of the Revels for the year ending on Shrove-Tuesday, 1571, was upwards of £1558; mainly expended on six plays, as follows: Lady Barbary, and Cloridon and Radiamanta, by Sir Robert Lane's men; Iphigenia, by the children of Paul's; Ajax and Ulysses, by the children of Windsor; Narcissus, by the children of the Chapel; Paris and Vienna, by the children of Westminster. The account states that these six plays "were chosen out of many, and found to be the best that were then to be had." Of course this choice was made by the Master of the Revels, whose duty it was to hear the plays rehearsed, before they were presented at Court. Besides the plays, there were six masques, and among the furnishings for both, are mentioned horse-tails, hobby-horses, branches of silk, and other garniture for pageants, sceptres, dishes for devil's eyes, devices for hell and hell-mouth, bows, bills, swords, spears, and fireworks. In the play of Narcissus, a fox was let loose, and pursued by dogs; for which a charge was made of 20*s.* 8*d.*; also, counterfeit thunder and lightning, at a cost of 22*s.* Twenty-one vizards, with long beards, and six Turks' vizards are also some of the articles specified.

How common the profession of actor had now become, is well shown in that strolling players calling themselves the retainers of noblemen were so numerous, that in 1572 a statute was found necessary for their regulation. The Act made to that end provides that "all fencers, bear-wards, common-players in interludes and minstrels, not belonging to any Baron of this realm, or any other honourable personage of greater degree, all jugglers, pedlars, tinkers, and petty chapmen, which shall wander abroad, and not have licence of two justices of the peace at least," shall be deemed and dealt with as rogues and vagabonds. The evil sought to be remedied was, that many companies were perambu-

lating the kingdom without any authority, but pretending to have it.

Still the thirst for dramatic exhibitions kept increasing. The expense for Court theatricals between Shrovetide, 1571, and June, 1572, was no less than £3905! No particulars of the outlay are given, further than that it was for "new making, setting forth, and furnishing divers masques and plays shown before her Majesty." From this time till 1575, the particulars are too numerous either for our space or the reader's patience: suffice it to say, that between the Christmas of 1572 and March, 1574, there were three performances at Court by a company of boys under Richard Mulcaster, then Master of the Merchant Tailors' School; four by the Earl of Leicester's men; two by the children of Windsor; two by the children of Westminster; one by the children of Paul's; one by Lord Clinton's servants; and one by the Earl of Warwick's players under Dutton.

Which brings us to an important event — briefly noticed in our Life of the Poet — in the history of the stage. On the 7th of May, 1574, the Queen ordered out a patent under the Great Seal, licencing and authorizing "our loving subjects, James Burbage, John Perkyn, John Laneham, William Johnson, and Robert Wilson, servants to our trusty and well-beloved cousin and counsellor, the Earl of Leicester, to use, exercise, and occupy the art and faculty of playing comedies, tragedies, interludes, stage-plays, and such other like as they have already used and studied, or shall hereafter use and study, as well for the recreation of our loving subjects, as for our solace and pleasure, when we shall think good to see them." This patent, which was doubtless procured through Leicester's influence with Elizabeth, made it the special privilege of the company to perform, during the Queen's pleasure, both in the City and Liberties of London, and in any cities, towns, and boroughs throughout the kingdom; the only proviso being, "that the said comedies, tragedies, interludes, and stage-plays be by the Master of

our Revels, for the time being, before seen and allowed, and that the same be not published or shown in the time of common prayer, or in the time of great and common plague in our said City of London."

This privilege was strenuously opposed by the London Corporation; and in July following a letter was written by the Privy Council to the Lord Mayor, requiring that the players be admitted within the City, and "be otherwise favourably used." In the next year, the Common Council made some orders touching plays, which, if enforced, would have entirely excluded them the City; enacting, under pain of fine and imprisonment, that no play should be there performed, which had not first been read and allowed by such persons as the Mayor and Aldermen might appoint; that the Mayor's licence be necessary before every public exhibition; and that half the money taken should be given to charitable purposes. How far the City prevailed in this contest with the Court, is not fully known; but soon after the date of the forecited measure a set of orders was printed, one of which looks as though they had succeeded in excluding plays from the limits of the Corporation, but not from the suburbs or Liberties. As the matter is rather edifying, we subjoin it:

"Forasmuch as the playing of interludes and the resort to the same are very dangerous for the infection of the plague, whereby infinite burdens and losses to the City may increase; and are very hurtful in corruption of youth with incontinence and lewdness; and also great wasting both of the time and thrift of many poor people; and great provoking of the wrath of God, the ground of all plagues; great withdrawing of the people from public prayer, and from the service of God; and daily cried out against by the preachers of the word of God; therefore it is ordered, that all such interludes in public places, and the resort to the same, shall wholly be prohibited as ungodly, and humble suit made to the Lords, that like prohibition be in places near unto the City."

This was followed by an earnest petition from "the Queen's poor players" to the Privy Council, requesting "all your Lordships' favourable letters unto the Lord Mayor of London, to permit us to exercise within the City; and also that the said letters may contain some order to the Justices of Middlesex; whereby we shall cease the continual troubling of your Lordships with often letters in the premises." It seems, that a copy of this petition, with, perhaps, certain orders suited to the case, must have been sent by the Privy Council to the City authorities; for they set forth a lengthy reply to it, from which we can give but the following: "Whereas they require only that her Majesty's servants be permitted to play; it is less evil than to grant more. But herein, if your Lordships will so allow them, it may please you to know, that the last year, when such toleration was of the Queen's players only, all the places of playing were filled with men calling themselves the Queen's players. Your Lordships may do well, in your letters or warrants for their toleration, to express the number of the Queen's players, and particularly all their names."

Hitherto, instead of houses or buildings set apart, arranged, and furnished for dramatic representations, resort was commonly had, for that purpose, to halls, churches, chapels, or temporary erections in streets and other open grounds. The proceedings of the London authorities led to consequences which they had not foreseen. Excluded from the City proper, Burbage and his fellows soon pitched upon a place beyond the Mayor's jurisdiction, but yet as near its limits as possible. This was the precinct of the ancient Blackfriars monastery, where they bought certain rooms with the view of converting them into a play-house. While the necessary alterations were making, divers inhabitants of the neighbourhood sent a petition to the Privy Council, praying that Burbage might not be allowed to go on with his undertaking. In this petition, after assigning certain reasons for their course, they proceed as follows: "In tender

consideration whereof, as also for there hath not at any time heretofore been used any common play-house within the same precinct; but that now, all players being banished by the Lord Mayor from playing within the City, by reason of the great inconvenience and ill rule that followeth them, they think to plant themselves in the Liberties; that therefore it would please your Honours to take order, that the same rooms may be converted to some other use, and that no play-house may be used or kept there."

Notwithstanding, the enterprise went ahead, and in 1576 the Blackfriars theatre was made ready for use. And by this time, though the precise date of their erection is not ascertained, there were two other play-houses in regular operation, called The Theatre and The Curtain: these were in Shoreditch, likewise beyond the Lord Mayor's jurisdiction.

Between the Christmas of 1574 and Shrove-Tuesday, 1582, a great number of plays were acted at Court by various companies; a summary statement of which will further illustrate the growth of the profession, and is all our space can afford. Eight pieces are noted as performed by Leicester's men, and one by "Lord Leicester's boys," as if he had two companies, a senior and a junior, under his patronage; nine, by the Lord Chamberlain's men; seven, by the Earl of Warwick's men; two, by Lord Howard's men; three, by the Earl of Derby's men; one, by Lord Hunsdon's men; one, by Lord Clinton's men; two, by the Earl of Sussex' men; eight, by the children of Windsor and of the Chapel; six, by the children of Paul's; and one, by Mulcaster's children.

Meanwhile, the tussle between the Court and City seems to have been renewed; as, in December, 1581, a letter was written to the Lord Mayor, ordering him to permit certain companies of players "to use and exercise their trade of playing in and about the City, as they have heretofore accustomed, upon the week-days only, being holidays or other days; so as they do forbear wholly to play on the Sabbath-

day, either in the forenoon or afternoon; which to do, they are by their Lordships' order expressly denied and forbidden." And in April following the Privy Council sent another letter to the Mayor, urging the reasonableness of allowing the players to perform for honest recreation's sake, and in order that they might attain to more perfection and dexterity, against their being called upon to act before the Queen. They also "pray his Lordship to revoke his late inhibition against their playing on holidays; but that he do suffer them, as well within the City as without, to use their exercise of playing on the said holidays after evening prayer, only forbearing the Sabbath-day, according to their Lordships' order; and when he shall find that the continuance of the same their exercise, by the increase of sickness or infection, shall be dangerous, to certify their Lordships, and they will presently take order accordingly."

Paris Garden having for a long time been used for bear-baiting, the galleries, being of wood, had become much decayed; and on Sunday, January 13th, 1582, one of them fell, during the exhibition, killing some persons, and hurting others. The next day, the Lord Mayor wrote to Lord Treasurer Burghley, and, after referring to the event, remarked, very justly, — "It giveth great occasion to acknowledge the hand of God for such abuse of the Sabbath-day, and moveth me in conscience to beseech your Lordship to give order for the redress of such contempt of God's service." The result was, that the forecited order of the Privy Council against playing on Sunday, which applied only to the City, was now made general; so that the catastrophe had, at least in some measure, the good effect of breaking up plays on Sunday.

Some two months later, the Queen, at the request of Secretary Walsingham, chose, out of some noblemen's companies that were used to act before her, twelve players for a company of her own. One of these was Robert Wilson, of "a quick, delicate, refined extemporal wit;" another was

Richard Tarlton, who was reckoned the best actor of the time in comic parts. Howes tells us, in his additions to Stowe, that "they were sworn the Queen's servants, and were allowed wages and liveries as grooms of the Chamber." The Christmas following, five pieces were played at Court by "her Majesty's servants," who of course were the new company thus formed.

Nor did the Queen's action towards supplying her court with pastimes stop here. In April, 1586, she issued a warrant under her sign manual, authorizing Thomas Gyles, Master of the Children of St. Paul's, "to take up such apt and meet children" as might be found in any Cathedrals and Collegiate churches in the kingdom, to be taught and trained for her special service. For the next two years, most of the plays at Court were performed by the Queen's new players and the company of boys thus established. Howbeit, in February, 1588, a tragedy called The Misfortunes of Arthur was acted before the Queen at Greenwich, by "the Gentlemen of Gray's Inn," who were very busy in theatricals during that winter. The play was written by Thomas Hughes, all but the Introduction, which was the work of Nicholas Trotte; and deserves special mention forasmuch as no less a man than "Mr. Francis Bacon" assisted in preparing the dumb-shows.

Secretary Walsingham, it seems, was accustomed to have certain hired intelligencers or spies prowling about London, to fish up news for him. One of these, calling himself a Soldier, wrote to his patron, on the 25th of January, 1586, a letter which, though doubtless having more or less of exaggeration, shows the prodigious activity of the Drama at that time. He makes a sort of episode on the stage, as follows:

"The daily abuse of stage-plays is such an offence to the godly, and so great a hindrance to the Gospel, as the Papists do exceedingly rejoice at the blemish thereof, and not without cause: for every day in the week the players' bills are

set up in sundry places of the City, some in the name of her Majesty's men, some, the Earl of Leicester, some, the Earl of Oxford, the Lord Admiral, and divers others; so that when the bells toll to the lecturer, the trumpets sound to the stages; whereat the wicked faction of Rome laugheth for joy, while the godly weep for sorrow. Woe is me! the play-houses are pestered, when churches are naked: at the one it is not possible to get a place, at the other void seats are plenty. The profaning of the Sabbath is redressed, but as bad a custom entertained, and yet still our long-suffering God forbeareth to punish. Yet it is a woeful sight, to see two hundred proud players jet in their silks, where five hundred poor people starve in the streets. But if needs this mischief must be tolerated, whereat, no doubt, the Highest frowneth, yet for God's sake, Sir, let every stage in London pay a weekly pension to the poor, that *ex hoc malo proveniat aliquod bonum:* but it were rather to be wished that players might be used, as Apollo did his laughing, *semel in anno.* Now, methinks, I see your Honour smile, and say to yourself, these things are fitter for the pulpit than a soldier's pen; but God, who searcheth the heart and reins, knoweth that I write not hypocritically, but from the very sorrow of my soul."

It was not long before the abuses of the stage called forth some decisive action, which resulted in the silencing of two companies. In 1589, Edmund Tylney, then Master of the Revels, and a part of whose duty was to watch over the stage, made, it seems, some complaint to Burghley against the actors in the City. Burghley thereupon wrote to the Mayor to put a stop to all plays within his jurisdiction. The main part of the Mayor's answer is as follows: "According to your Lordship's good pleasure, I presently sent for such players as I could hear of, so as there appeared yesterday before me the Lord Admiral's and the Lord Strange's players; to whom I specially gave in charge, and required them in her Majesty's name, to forbear playing until further order

might be given for their allowance in that respect. Whereupon the Lord Admiral's players very dutifully obeyed; but the others, in very contemptuous manner departing from me, went to the Cross Keys, and played that afternoon, to the great offence of the better sort, that knew they were prohibited by order from your Lordship. Which as I might not suffer, so I sent for the said contemptuous persons, who having no reasons to allege for their contempt, I could do no less but this evening commit two of them to one of the Counters; and do mean, according to your Lordship's direction, to prohibit all playing until your Lordship's pleasure therein be further known."

This letter was dated the 6th of November, 1589. Six days after, the Privy Council wrote letters to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Mayor of London, and the Master of the Revels, requiring the first two to choose each a suitable person, and the last to join with the persons so chosen in inspecting and licensing all plays to be acted in and about the City.

The cause of these proceedings was this: About that time the Marprelate controversy was at its height, and Martin Marprelate had been brought upon the public stage. This is evident from a tract by Nash, printed that year, where, referring to Martin, the writer proceeds, — "Methought *Vetus Comœdia* began to prick him at London in the right vein, when she brought forth Divinity with a scratch'd face, holding of her heart as if she were sick because Martin would have forced her; but, missing of his purpose, he left the print of his nails upon her cheeks, and poisoned her with a vomit, which he ministered unto her to make her cast up her dignities and promotions."

Of course the Old Comedy and Divinity here spoken of were stage personifications, and Martin one of the *dramatis personæ* in the same piece with them. Not long after, John Lyly, who wrote some of the Marprelate tracts, published a pamphlet wherein he clearly infers that some plays on the

subject had been stayed. Alluding to Martin, he says, — "Would *those comedies might be allowed to be play'd that are penned*, and then I am sure he would be deciphered, and so, perhaps, discouraged. He shall not be brought in, *as whilome he was*, and yet very well, with a cock's comb, an ape's face, a wolf's belly, cat's claws, &c., but in a capp'd cloak, and all the best apparel he wore the highest day in the year. A stage-player, though he be but a cobbler by occupation, yet his chance may be to play the king's part. Martin, of what calling soever he be, can play nothing but the knave's part. Would it not be a fine tragedy, when *Mardocheus* shall play a Bishop in a play, and Martin, Haman; and that he that seeks to pull down those that are set in high authority above him, should be hoisted upon a tree above all other?" Here the allusion is plainly to some play of Martin marring the Prelates; and the writer adds in a note, — "If he be showed at Paul's, it will cost you four-pence; at the Theatre, two-pence; at St. Thomas-a-Watrings, nothing." From which it would seem that the matter in question had been brought upon the stage by the children of St. Paul's, and by the actors of the Theatre play-house. St. Thomas-a-Watrings was a place of execution, where of course a tragical sight might be seen for nothing.

It appears that about the same time, and probably for the same cause, a stop was put to the acting of the children of St. Paul's; for in Lyly's Endymion, published in 1591, the writer says, — "Since the Plays in Paul's were dissolved, there are certain comedies come to my hands." As the matter is further treated in our third chapter of the Poet's Life, we will dismiss it by simply adding, that the Mayor's total prohibition of playing was but temporary.

There was a singular passage between some players and the University of Cambridge, which perhaps ought not to be omitted. As far back as 1575, the Privy Council had sent letters to the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge, in which, after

stating the necessity of keeping pure the fountains whence learning flowed to all parts of the kingdom, they forbade common players to perform either at the University or within five miles round it. In the summer of 1592, a company of players, with Dutton at their head, repaired to Cambridge, intending to perform there. On the 1st of September, the Vice-Chancellor and certain justices of peace issued a warrant to the constable for preventing such design. Nevertheless, the players did perform at Chesterton, which was within the prescribed limits. On the 8th, Dr. Some, the Vice-Chancellor, wrote to the Privy Council, reciting the orders of 1575, complaining of the late offence, and requesting that the offending parties might be punished. Not getting any answer, Dr. Some, and several heads of colleges with him, ten days after, wrote again, repeating the complaint, with further particulars against Lord North and Dutton who had treated their authority with contempt. After referring to the forementioned warrant, they proceed thus:

"How slightly that warrant was regarded, as well by the constables and the inhabitants of Chesterton, as by the players themselves, appeared by their bills set up upon our college-gates, and by their playing at Chesterton, notwithstanding our said warrant to the contrary. One of the constables told us, that he heard the players say that they were licenced by the Lord North to play in Chesterton. We cannot charge his Lordship otherwise in that particular; but we are able to justify, that the Lord North, upon a like occasion heretofore, being made acquainted with the said letters of the Lords of the Council, returned answer in writing, that those letters were no perpetuity."

After going on somewhile further in the same strain, they close by asking a renewal of the orders of 1575, that Lord North and the players might not be able to take shelter under the plea of their having expired. Thus the matter rested till July, 1593, when the Vice-Chancellor reminded Lord Burghley on the subject, and prayed that the University

might be freed from players. A few days after, the orders were accordingly renewed, and a copy of the same sent to the authorities of Oxford.

Meanwhile, however, in December, 1592, Dr. John Still, then at the head of Cambridge University, received an order from Court, that an English comedy should be got up there for the Queen's recreation, as, because of the plague, her own actors could not play before her at Christmas. This looks very like an intended reproof of the University. Be that as it may, Dr. Still, though himself the author of Gammer Gurton's Needle, an English comedy, which was acted before the Queen at Christ College in 1566, wrote the following in answer, six others joining with him:

"Upon Saturday last, being the 2d of December, we received letters from Mr. Vice-Chamberlain, wherein, by reason that her Majesty's own servants in this time of infection may not disport her Highness with their wonted pastimes, his Honour hath moved our University to prepare a comedy in English, to be acted before her Highness by some of our students in this time of Christmas. How ready we are to do any thing that may tend to her Majesty's pleasure, we are very desirous by all means to testify; but how fit we shall be for this, having no practice in this English vein, and being, as we think, nothing beseeming our students, we much doubt. English comedies, *for that we never used any*, we presently have none: to make or translate one in such shortness of time, we shall not be able; and therefore, if we must needs undertake the business, and that with conveniency it may be granted, these two things we would gladly desire,—some further time for due preparation, and liberty to play in Latin. How fit these are to be requested or granted, your Lordship, who well knoweth her Majesty's disposition and our manner, is best able to judge: ourselves only do move them, referring both them and the whole cause unto your Lordship's consideration."

This remonstrance appears to have been effectual: but

the next year Dr. Thomas Legge, who wrote a Latin tragedy of Richard III., was Vice-Chancellor; and in a letter to Lord Burghley he spoke of some offence given to the Queen, and stated that the University had sent some of its body to Oxford to see the entertainment given her Majesty there, in order to be better prepared for obeying her directions in future. The difference seems to have been arranged before the Christmas of 1594, since the University then acted certain comedies and a tragedy, and requested a loan of the royal robes in the Tower for that purpose.

We have now brought down the account of theatricals as far as our plan requires. From the great impetus already noted, it may well be presumed that there was a still further growth in after-years; which was indeed the case. Before the end of the sixteenth century, there were divers other play-houses in the City and suburbs of London, besides the three already mentioned; as the Whitefriars, the Newington Butts, the Rose, the Hope, the Paris Garden, the Globe, the Swan, and the Fortune. On the whole, it is pretty evident, that in Shakespeare's time the Drama was decidedly a great Institution; it was a sort of fourth Estate in the realm, nearly as much so, perhaps, as the newspaper Press is in our day: practically, the Government of the commonwealth was vested in King, Lords, Commons, and Dramatists, including in the latter both writers and actors; so that the Poet had far more reason than now exists, for making Hamlet say to the old statesman, — "After your death you were better have a bad epitaph, than their ill report while you live"

CHAPTER IV.

COMEDY AND TRAGEDY.

We have seen how the old Miracle-plays gradually gave way to Moral-plays; first borrowing some of their materials, then thrown into the back-ground, and finally quite displaced, by what they had borrowed. Yet both these forms of the Drama were radically different from Comedy and Tragedy, in the proper sense of these terms: there was very little of character or of human blood in them; and even that little was not there by any natural right; being forced in by external causes, and not a free or native outgrowth from the genius or principle of the thing. The first, in their proper idea and original plan, were but a mechanical collocation of the events of Scripture and old legend, carried on by a sort of personal representatives; the historical forms being every thing, individual traits nothing, in the exhibition: the second, a mere procession of abstract ideas rudely and inartificially personified, with something of fantastical drapery thrown around them. So that both alike stood apart from the vitalities of nature and the abiding interests of thought, being indeed quite innocent of the knowledge of them: both were the legitimate product of a people among whom the principles of a most generous culture had been planted, but had not yet fructified; who had the powers of the highest art rather lying on the surface of their mind than rooted in its substance; a treasure of grace and truth adopted, but not incorporated.

Of course it was impossible that such things, themselves the offspring of darkness, should stand the light. None but children in mind — in the dim twilight "how easy is a bush supposed a bear" — could mistake them for truth, or keep up any real sympathy with such unvital motions. Precluded

from the endless variety of individual nature and characteristic specialty, they could not but run into great sameness and monotony: it was at the best little more than a repetition of one fundamental air under certain arbitrary variations. As the matter shown was always much the same, the interest had to depend chiefly on the manner of showing it: so that the natural result was, either a cumbrous and clumsy excess of manner, or else a stupifying tediousness of effect; unless, indeed, it drew beyond itself; and in doing this it could not but create a taste that would sooner or later force its entire withdrawal from the scene.

Accordingly, Moral-plays, at a comparatively early period in their course, began, as we have seen, to deviate into veins of matter foreign to their original design; points of native humour and wit, lines of personal interest were taken in to diversify and relieve the allegorical sameness; these grew more and more into the main texture of the workmanship: so that the older occupant may, in some sort, be said to have begotten the new species by which itself was in due time superseded. As the new elements gained strength and grew firm, much of the old treasure proved to be mere refuse and dross; as such it was discarded: nevertheless, whatsoever of sterling wealth had been accumulated, was sucked in, retained, and carried up into the supervening growth.

So that the allegorical drama had great influence, no doubt, in determining the scope and quality of the proper drama of comedy and tragedy; since, by its long discipline of the popular mind in abstract ideas, it did much, very much, towards forming that public taste which required the drama to rise above a mere geography of facts into the empyrean of truth; and under the instruction of which Shakespeare learned to make his persons embodiments of general nature as well as of individual character. For the excellences of the Shakespearian drama were probably owing as much to the mental preparation of the time as to the powers of the individual man: he was in demand before

he came, and it was that pre-existing demand that taught and enabled him to do what he did. In short, as it was the strength of his genius that lifted him to the top of the heap, so it was the greatness of the heap that enabled him to reach and maintain that elevation. For it is a great mistake to regard Shakespeare as standing alone, and working only in the powers of his individual mind. In fact, there was never any growth of literature or art that stood upon a wider basis of collective experience, or that drew its form and substance from a larger or more varied stock of historical preparation.

The beginnings, then, of English comedy and tragedy were made long before these appeared in distinct formation. Of course, by comedy and tragedy, we mean the drama of individual character and action as distinguished from symbolical representations. And the first known hand that drew off the elements of comedy and moulded them into a structure by themselves, was John Heywood, who belonged to the Revels establishment of Henry VIII., and in 1514 had a salary of £20 a year as "the singer," and also, in 1538, a quarterly allowance of £2 10*s.* as "player on the virginals." His pieces, however, have not the form of comedies. He called them Interludes, a name in use many years before, and perhaps adopted by him as indicating the purpose to which he designed them, of filling up the gaps or intervals of banquets and other entertainments. They are short, not taking much more time than a single Act in an ordinary comedy. Yet they have the substance of comedy, in that they give pictures of real life and manners, containing much sprightliness of dialogue, and not a little of humour and character, and varied with amusing incident and allusion drawn fresh from the writer's observation, with the dews of nature upon them. This will readily appear upon a brief analysis of some of them.

Heywood's oldest piece, written as early as 1521, though not printed till 1533, is entitled "A merry Play between

the Pardoner and the Friar, the Curate and neighbour Pratt. A Pardoner and a Friar have each got leave of the Curate to use his church, the one to exhibit his relics, the other to preach a sermon, the object of both being, simply, to make money. The Friar comes first, and is about to begin his preachment, when the other enters and disturbs him: each wants to be heard first, and, after a long fierce trial which has the stronger pair of lungs, they fall into a regular performance of mutual kicking and cuffing. The Curate, aroused to the spot by the clamour, endeavours to part them; failing of this, he calls in neighbour Pratt, and then seizes the Friar, leaving Pratt to manage the other, their purpose being, to set them in the stocks. But they get the worst of it altogether; in fact, they are treated to a sound drubbing; whereupon they gladly come to terms, allowing the Pardoner and Friar quietly to depart. As a specimen of the incidents, we may mention that the Friar, while his whole sermon is against covetousness, harps much on the voluntary poverty of his order, and then gives out his purpose of taking up a collection. In a like spirit of satirical humour, the Pardoner is made to exhibit some very laughable relics, such as "the great toe of the Holy Trinity," the bongrace and French hood of the Virgin Mary, articles of dress worn at that time, and the "blessed jaw-bone" of all the saints in the Calendar;

> "Which relic, without any fail,
> Against poison chiefly doth prevail."

Another of Heywood's pieces, also printed in 1533, is called "A merry Play between John the husband, Tib the wife, and Sir John the priest." Tib the wife being absent from home, John, who is a hen-pecked husband, brags of his domestic ascendency, and threatens to give her a lusty trouncing on her return. Just then she enters, having overheard him, and demands whom he is going to beat: he dodges off, that "it was Stockfish in Thames-street." She complains of sickness, and he attributes it to her drinking

with Sir John the priest, which, it seems, was a common pastime with her. She then produces a pie, which she has brought home with her; tells him it was made by herself, her gossip Margery, and Sir John; sends him off to invite Sir John to supper; and he dare not refuse to go, though mighty suspicious that she has been playing him false. Sir John having come, she sends her husband out for water to wash their hands with before eating: while he is gone, she and Sir John make merry together at the tricks she has practised upon him: John finds the pail too leaky for use; returns; is furnished with wax, to stop the leaks; while he is busy putting it on, she and Sir John despatch the pie, not heeding his remonstrances, and he not daring to enforce a share of it from them. At last his patience gives way; he throws down the pail in high dudgeon; whereupon Tib and Sir John pitch into him till they make the blood "run about his ears," and then put off together: he fancies they have fled from his superior prowess; but, suddenly bethinking himself that they have withdrawn for another purpose, makes after them, "to see if they do him any villainy;" which concludes the performance.

Another of his pieces, also full of broad fun, and equally smacking of real life, is entitled The Four Ps; while a fourth, called The Play of the Weather, has something the character of a Moral-play, the Vice figuring in it under the name of Merry Report. What we have given may suffice to indicate the decided steps taken by Heywood in the direction of genuine comedy.

An anonymous interlude called Thersites, and written in 1537, deserves mention as the oldest dramatic piece in English, with characters borrowed from secular history. The object of the piece as stated in the title-page is, to "declare how that the greatest boasters are not the greatest doers." Thersites, the hero, enters fresh from the siege of Troy: having lost his armour, he applies to Mulciber to forge him a new suit. Among other things, he wants "a sallet made

of steel," meaning a helmet; Vulcan takes him to mean a salad; and he has much ado to beat into the artizan's head precisely what it is that he wants. Being at length furnished with a sword that will pare iron, the hero exclaims, —"Now have at the lions on Cotswold," a proverbial expression for sheep. He then dares King Arthur and his knights of the round table, and divers other English heroes, to fight, and avows his determination to walk through London, let come what will. His mother, thinking his wordy rage may import danger to somebody, tries in vain to appease his wrath: in reply he alludes to Robinhood and Little John, calling them "Robin John and Littlehood," and vows to "teach such outlaws" how hereafter "they take away Abbots' purses." This is followed by a mighty battle with a snail, mixed up with references to Friar Tuck: after due deliberation, Thersites makes at the beast with club and sword, and finally compels him to haul in his horns. "A poor soldier come of late from Calais" then enters, and the hero runs off in a fright. Next, a child named Telemachus comes to the hero's mother with a letter from Ulysses, requesting her to doctor the bringer, who is troubled with worms: she undertakes his cure, and gives him a charm for that purpose. This done, the soldier enters again, and the hero again makes off with all his legs, leaving his club and sword behind him; which concludes the piece. From all which it will be seen that the interlude has nothing of historical matter but the names: it is merely a piece of broad comedy in the vein of English life and manners.

Another piece of a much more serious character, approaching to tragedy, was printed about 1530, with a title as follows: "A new comedy in English, in manner of an interlude, right elegant, and full of craft and rhetoric; wherein is showed and described as well the beauty and good properties of women, as their vices and evil conditions, with a moral conclusion and exhortation to virtue." The story is very simple and soon told. Calisto, a young gallant, is in

love with Melibea, who dislikes him. By the advice of Sempronio, a parasite, he bribes old Celestina, a common bawd, into his service. She tries to persuade the heroine to meet Calisto at her house: failing of this, she pretends that he is dying of the tooth-ache, and that nothing will relieve him but the use of Melibea's hallowed girdle, aided by her prayers. The maiden, thus appealed to, consents to lend him the girdle, which is employed as symbolical of a far dearer favour. No sooner has she yielded it, than she is smitten with grief and remorse; she confesses the fault to Danio her father, and prays to Heaven for pardon and help Danio then follows with a discourse of warning to old and young, and the piece ends. The play is exceedingly short, and has nothing either of the supernatural or the allegorical in its structure: as to its merits in other respects, there is little to be said; and it is noticed merely as illustrating the gradual working up of the Drama into a new species.

We now come to the oldest known specimen of a regular English comedy. Ralph Roister Doister was written as early at least as 1551, though not licensed for the press till 1566. It was the work of Nicholas Udall, a name distinguished in the early literature of the Reformation. Udall was born in 1505 or 1506; admitted a scholar of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, in 1520; took his Bachelor's degree in 1524; and proceeded Master of Arts in 1534, being hindered till that time on account of his attachment to the Reformation. The same year, 1534, he was appointed Head-Master of Eton, then famous for teaching the classics; became a Prebendary of Windsor in 1551, and in 1553 Rector of Calborne in the Isle of Wight; was afterwards made Head-Master of Westminster school, and died in 1556. In our preceding Chapter, we met with him as the author of "an English play called Ezechias," which was performed before the Queen at King's College, Cambridge, in 1564.

In his prologue to Ralph Roister Doister the author refers

to Plautus and Terence as his models. The play is in five Acts, which are duly subdivided into scenes; the scene is in London, the persons and manners all English; the number of characters thirteen, four of whom are women. The hero and heroine are Ralph Roister Doister and Dame Christian Custance a widow: in the train of the former are Matthew Merrygreek, Dobinet Doughty, and Harpax; of the latter, Truepenny her man, Madge Mumblecrust her nurse, Tibet Talkapace, and Annot Alyface. The play is opened by Matthew, who enters singing, and expounds his mind in a soliloquy, dilating on his patron's qualities and his own. Presently Ralph comes in talking to himself; declares he is weary of life, and regrets that God has made him "such a goodly person;" calls on his friend Matthew for counsel and help, as he is dying for love of a lady whose name he does not at first remember, and who, he hears, is engaged to a merchant named Gawin Goodluck. Matthew consoles him with the assurance that his figure is such as no woman can resist, and that the people go into raptures over him as he passes in the street, comparing him to divers ancient Worthies and heroes of romance; all which he swallows greedily, and promises the speaker a new coat. Next we have a scene of Madge spinning, Tibet sewing, and Annot knitting: after some talk in praise of the good fare allowed them by their mistress, they fall into a merry passage of rallying and joking each other, enlivened from time to time with snatches of song. Ralph overhears them, and takes joy to think of the merry life he shall lead with a wife who keeps such servants; wants to strike up an acquaintance with them, but knows not what to say; at length, Annot having gone out, he salutes the old nurse with a kiss, and proposes to kiss Tibet too, but she puts him off with sundry jests, till she is called away to her mistress; when, being left alone with Madge, he reveals to her his state of mind. While he is telling "a great long tale in her ear," Matthew returns with Dobinet and Harpax, and they pretend to mistake Madge

for Dame Custance herself; whereat Ralph gets full of wrath, but forgives them on a suitable apology, and they have a song together on matrimony. After they have gone, Madge delivers a letter which Ralph has left with her for Dame Custance.

The next day, Dobinet comes with a ring and token, which Madge refuses to deliver, she having been scolded for taking the letter. Truepenny, Tibet, and Annot then enter, and he tells them he is a messenger from their lady's intended husband, but takes care not to mention that husband's name. They are delighted at the prospect of such a change in the family, and almost get into a quarrel which shall carry the ring and token to their mistress. In the next scene, they all get sharply reproved by Dame Custance for taking rings and tokens without knowing from whom they come; which closes the second Act.

In Act iii., Matthew is sent, to see how the land lies. Being brought before the lady, he learns that her hand is already engaged, that there is no chance for Ralph, and that she has not even read his letter. He returns to his master, and tells him she will have nothing to do with him, and how she abuses him with opprobrious epithets. Ralph now declares that he shall die on the spot: Matthew, to carry on the joke, pretends to think him really dying, and calls in the parish clerk and others to sing a mock *requiem* over him. As Ralph soon revives, Matthew counsels him to put on a bold face, and go to the lady himself, and claim her hand, after treating her to a serenade. He agrees to this plan; and while they are singing the lady enters: he declares his passion; she rejects him with scorn, and returns his letter unread: Matthew thereupon reads it in her hearing, but so varies the pointing as to turn the sense all up side down; and Ralph denies it to be his. Here she leaves them; and Matthew again goes to refreshing Ralph with extravagant praise of his person; wishes himself a woman for his sake; advises him to refrain from Custance awhile, which will soon

bring her creeping to him on her knees: he consents, swearing revenge, meanwhile, against the Scrivener, who spoilt the meaning of his letter. The Scrivener, being sent for, reads the letter as himself had pointed it; whereupon Ralph is forced to confess that nothing better for his purpose could have been written.

In the fourth Act, Sim Suresby comes from Goodluck, to salute the lady on his master's return from a voyage: while they are talking, Ralph arrives with Matthew; gives loud directions for arms to be ready in case he should need them; addresses the lady as his wife and spouse: whereupon Sim, thinking them to be married, goes to inform his master what seems to have happened in his absence. The Dame, full of grief and anger at this staining of her good name, calls on her man and maids to drive out Ralph and Matthew, who quickly retreat, but threaten to return. She then sends for her friend Tristram Trusty, to counsel her; and Matthew enters, to tell her that he has only joined with Ralph to make fun of him, and that Ralph is about to renew the assault, "with a sheep's look full grim;" and she proceeds to "pitch a field with her maids" for his reception. This is followed by the return of Ralph, armed with kitchen utensils and a pop-gun, attended by Matthew, Dobinet, and Harpax, and threatening to destroy all with fire and sword. The issue of the scrape is, that the lady and her maids drive off the assailants with mop and broom; Matthew managing to have all his blows light on Ralph, though pretending to fight on his side.

Act v. opens with the arrival of Goodluck and his man Sim, both persuaded of the lady's infidelity. She proceeds to welcome her betrothed with much affection, but he draws back, and calls for explanation: she protests her innocence, and refers him to Trusty. So away go he and Sim to seek for Trusty, who presently gives them entire satisfaction in the matter; so that Goodluck soon comes back, and receives his lady-love with joy. Matthew then comes from Ralph

entreating pardon for what is past, and they consent to take him into favour: Matthew hastens back to Ralph with the news, and assures him they are heartily glad to be reconciled, from terror of his arms and prowess. Ralph is invited to the wedding-supper, and then comes the epilogue.

Considering the date of this piece, it is certainly one of extraordinary merit: it has considerable wit and humour, in which there is nothing coarse or vulgar; the dialogue abounds in variety and spirit; the characters are well discriminated and life-like. The idea of Merrygreek was evidently caught from the old Vice; but his love of sport and mischief is without malignity, and the interest of his part turns on the character, not on the trimmings. Like its predecessors generally, the play is written in lines of unequal length, and with nothing to distinguish them as verse but the rhymes.

In this respect, we meet with something of improvement in another piece which has lately come to light, and which appears from internal evidence to have been written about 1560. It is called Misogonus, from the hero's name. The scene is laid in Italy, but the manners and allusions are English, while the persons have Greek and Roman names, significant of their tempers or positions. The play opens with a scene between Philogonus and Eupelas, wherein the former relates his marriage, the birth of a son, and the death of his wife; also, how the son's education had been neglected, till he had become hardened in evil past recovery. Eupelas tries to persuade him that Misogonus will in time reform; promises to reason with the youth touching his misconduct; but is warned to take care how he engages in such a hopeless task. While they are talking Cacurgus enters, and calls his master to supper. The old men leave him on the stage: after a song, in which he laughs at them, he makes a speech to the audience, descanting on the vices of his young master, and winds up by giving away the points of his dress among the spectators. The hero then enters blustering; threatens

to kill Cacurgus; soon gets into familiar chat with him; tells him he is "as full of knavery as an egg is full of meat:" Cacurgus informs him that he has heard his father speaking of him to Eupelas as "a parlous unthrifty lad," and that Eupelas is going to take him in hand; whereat Misogonus falls into a storm of rage. Cacurgus then engages to go and send Eupelas out, while the hero collects his servants and makes ready to fall upon him. Misogonus calls in his man Orgalus; they stand aside, and, when Eupelas comes, rush out upon him, but he makes good his retreat. The hero then goes to abusing Orgalus for letting the old man escape: Oenophilus, another servant, explains that he could not come in time to help, because he had been drinking with a fellow who picked his pocket and ran away: Misogonus goes to beating him; Cacurgus enters, begs him to desist in the Queen's name, but gets a blow in reply. The servant owns that he had got no more than he deserved; declares that his master exceeds "the nine Worthies;" promises to take him on a hunt for "two-legged venison," and is cordially forgiven.

After several less important matters, we find the hero disporting himself with Melissa, a deer that he has been hunting. Having refreshed herself with muscadine, the lady proposes "a cast at the bones;" but, as no dice are at hand, Oenophilus is sent for Sir John the Vicar, who, it is said, "has not a drop of priest's blood in him," and is sure to be well furnished with cards and dice. Meanwhile, Cacurgus joins the party, and is surprised so see the hero with such "a fair maid Marian," who is "as good as brown Bessy." The servant soon returns with Sir John, whom he found at an ale-house. The Vicar first stakes his gown on a trick of legerdemain at cards; loses it; but succeeds so well with the bones, that he is suspected of using "some dice of vantage;" luck again deserts him; while he is hard at play, the parish clerk comes to fetch him to his church: he tells the clerk to read the service himself, omitting certain parts of it;

but, on learning that Susan Sweetlips is waiting for him, is for performing his own duty; whereupon Cacurgus swears to knock out his brains if he stirs. The gambling at length winds up with a dancing-spree; and while the rest are at this Cacurgus steals out and brings in Eupelas, Philogonus, and an honest old servant of the latter named Liturgus, to see the sport. Then comes an abusing-match on all sides, Liturgus declaring "there's no mischief, but a priest at one end;" at last the hero and his set withdraw, leaving the others on the stage, when Eupelas and Liturgus endeavour to console the unhappy father.

In the third Act, Custer Codrus, a country tenant of Philogonus, comes to town with a pair of capons for his landlord, and complains of having lost a sow. Cacurgus cheats him out of the capons, substituting two hens for them, but brings him to speak with Philogonus. Codrus finds the old man in great grief on account of his son; informs him that he has another son alive, his wife having borne twins; offers to prove the fact by his wife Alison, who was present at the birth; whereat the spirit of Philogonus revives. Alison, being brought in, goes to talking of her bead-roll and other things, which show her to be a Roman Catholic; so that Codrus has to remind her that their "master is of the new learning," that is, a Protestant: Philogonus hears from Alison that his wife had borne twins, and by the advice of certain learned men had sent one of them away secretly into Apolonia, to be brought up by an uncle and aunt. Liturgus is forthwith despatched in quest of the older son. The hero being informed of these things, calls on Cacurgus for aid and advice, and the latter proposes to steal the deeds of the old man's estates.

Isbel Busby and Madge Caro, who had also been present at the birth, next make their appearance. As Madge stammers and has the tooth-ache, Cacurgus takes them in hand he pretends to be a great Egyptian, able to cure all sorts of maladies; makes a long speech to them on his own merits,

to which they listen with wonder; gives Madge a mock prescription, containing a drachm of "Venus-hair infidelity" and "an ounce of popery;" intrigues with them to deny that Misogonus had an elder brother, and tries to persuade them that a fairy had changed the child in the cradle. Presently, Eugonus, the lost son, arrives, and is recognised by the three women. By the help of a person named Crito, they put circumstances together, and, on ripping open the hose of Eugonus, find he has a sixth toe on one of his feet; which is proof positive that he is the elder twin who was sent into Apolonia. Eugonus is then brought to his father, asks his blessing, and gets it, with all the old man's heart. Soon after, the hero and his two men enter with weapons; a scene of abuse and confusion follows, when the servants, being left alone with their master, find how the case stands with him, and desert him; which sets Misogonus upon a course of repentance and amendment.

Next, we have a queer scene betwixt Cacurgus and the audience. It seems that Cacurgus, who belonged to the family of Philogonus, has been dismissed for his malpractices. After stating this fact to the audience, he appeals to them to "take pity on a stray fool," and asks if there be any crier among them: no answer being given, he then makes a long amusing proclamation of his want of service, and his qualifications as a fool. Finding no one to hire him, he remarks, "fools now may go a-begging, everybody's become so witty."

The fifth Act of the play is wanting; but in the last remaining scene of the fourth the hero, urged by Liturgus, becomes heartily repentant, and is reconciled to his father. As the action seems already complete, it is not easy to conceive what the fifth Act was made of.

The great merits of this piece, as an early specimen of comedy, are somewhat apparent, we hope, from our analysis. The characterisation is certainly diversified and sustained with no little skill; while many of the incidents and situations

are highly diverting. The events of the play obviously extend over a considerable space of time; yet the unity of action is so well maintained that the diversities of time do not press upon the mind. On the whole, it is clear that even at that early date the principles of the Gothic Drama were vigorously at work, in preparation for that magnificent fruitage of art which came to full harvest, ere she who then sat on the English throne was taken to her rest. It may be needful to remark, that Sir John the Vicar was meant as a satire on the Roman Catholic priesthood. In one place it is said of him, —

> "A Bible, nay, soft you! he'll yet be more wise;
> I tell you, he's none of this new start-up rabble."

But perhaps the most note-worthy feature of the play is Cacurgus, who, as may be gathered from the foregoing account, is a specimen of the professional domestic fool that succeeded to the old Vice. And he is one of the most remarkable instances of his class, that have survived; there being no other play of so early a date, wherein the part is used with any thing like equal skill. Before his master, Cacurgus commonly affects the mere simpleton, but at other times is full of versatile shrewdness and waggish mischief. He is usually called, both by himself and others, Will Summer; as though he were understood to model his action after the celebrated court fool of Henry VIII.

Hitherto we have no instance of regular tragedy, which in England was of later growth than comedy; though we have in several cases seen that some beginnings of tragedy were made in the older species of drama. The story of Romeo and Juliet, as may be seen from our Introduction to that play, was brought on the stage before 1562; in what specific form, we are without the means of deciding; though of course, from the nature of the subject, it must have been tragical. The Tragedy of Gorboduc, or, as it is sometimes called, of Ferrex and Porrex, is on several accounts deserv-

ing of special attention. It is regularly arranged in Acts and scenes, and is the oldest extant specimen of English tragedy so arranged. As we have already seen, it was acted before the Queen at Whitehall, by the gentlemen of the Inner Temple, on the 18th of January, 1562: it was also printed three times, in 1565, 1571, and 1590; which shows that it stood high in public repute. The title-page of 1565 informs us that three Acts were written by Thomas Norton, and the last two by Thomas Sackville. Norton, according to Wood, was "a forward and busy Calvinist, and a noted zealot:" be that as it may, he made and published a translation of Calvin's Institutes, which went through five editions during his lifetime. Sackville was afterwards Earl of Dorset: he succeeded Burghley as Lord Treasurer in 1599, which office he held till his death, in 1608; and was eulogized by divers pens, Lord Bacon's being one, for his eloquence, his learning, his charity, and integrity.

We probably cannot do better than to quote Warton's abstract of the play, which is brief and accurate, as follows: "Gorboduc, a king of Britain about 600 years before Christ, made in his lifetime a division of his kingdom to his sons Ferrex and Porrex. The two young Princes within five years quarrelled for universal sovereignty. A civil war ensued, and Porrex slew his elder brother Ferrex. Their mother, Videna, who loved Ferrex best, revenged his death by entering Porrex's chamber in the night, and murdering him in his sleep. The people, exasperated at the cruelty and treachery of this murder, rose in rebellion, and killed both Videna and Gorboduc. The nobility then assembled, collected an army, and destroyed the rebels. An intestine war commenced between the chief lords: the succession of the crown became uncertain and arbitrary, for want of a lineal royal issue; and the country, destitute of a king, and wasted by domestic slaughter, was reduced to a state of the most miserable desolation."

Each Act of the tragedy is preceded by a dumb-show,

significant of what is forthcoming; and all, except the last are followed by choruses, in imitation of the Greek Drama, moralizing on the events. The quality of the dumb-shows may be judged from that to the first Act: "First the music of violins began to play, during which, come upon the stage six wild men clothed in leaves. Of whom the first bare in his neck a fagot of small sticks, which they all, both severally and together, assayed with all their strengths to break; but it could not be broken by them. At the length, one of them plucked out one of the sticks, and brake it; and the rest, plucking out all the other sticks one after another, did easily break the same, being severed, which, being conjoined, they had before attempted in vain. After they had this done, they departed the stage, and the music ceased. Hereby was signified, that a state knit in unity doth continue strong against all force, but, being divided, is easily destroyed."

But the most notable feature of the piece is, that all except the choruses is in blank-verse; in which respect it was without precedent, a great and noble innovation; what was then known on the stage being mostly written in alternate or consecutive rhyme. And the versification runs abundantly smooth on the ear; beyond which, little can be said in its favour; though that was indeed much for the time. With considerable force of thought and language, the speeches are excessively formal, stately, and didactic; the dialogue is but a series of studied declamation, without any gushings of life, or any relish of individual traits: in a word, all is mere state rhetoric speaking in the same vein, now from one mouth, now from another. From the subject-matter, the unities of time and place are necessarily disregarded, while there is no continuity of action or character to lift it above the circumscriptions of sense. The several Acts and scenes stand apart, each by itself, and follow one another without any principle of inherent succession: there is indeed nothing like an organic composition of the parts

no weaving of them together into a vital whole, by the laws of dramatic coherence or development. Still the piece is a very great advance on all that is known to have gone before it. In the single article of blank-verse, though having all the monotony of structure that the most regular rhyming versifier could give it, it did more for dramatic improvement, than, perhaps, could have been done by a century of labour without that step being taken.

From this time till we come to Shakespeare's immediate predecessors, there is a considerable number and variety of dramas, most of which we shall have to despatch rather summarily. Richard Edwards was esteemed more highly in his time than we can discover any good reason for; which was probably owing in part to the strong praise of Elizabeth, whose taste or fancy he happened to hit in the right spot. Meres, in his Wit's Commonwealth, 1598, sets him down as one of "the best for comedy amongst us." Damon and Pythias is the only play of his extant; though, as was seen in the preceding Chapter, we hear of another piece by him, called Palamon and Arcite, which was acted before the Queen at Oxford in 1556, about two months before the author's death. Damon and Pythias is a sort of tragi-comedy, and is in rhyme. How little account the writer made of dramatic propriety, may be judged from the fact of his taking Grim the Collier of Croydon to the court of Dionysius, where he plays at verbal buffoonery with two lackeys named Jack and Will.

We have before mentioned The Supposes, translated from the Italian of Ariosto by George Gascoigne, and acted at Gray's Inn in 1566. It is chiefly remarkable as being the oldest extant play in English prose. Jocasta, also acted at Gray's Inn the same year, demands notice as the second known play in blank-verse. It was avowedly taken from the *Phœnissæ* of Euripides, but can hardly be called a translation, since, as Warton observes, it makes "many omissions, retrenchments, and transpositions;" though the main sub-

stance of the original is retained. The second, third, and fifth Acts were by Gascoigne; the first and fourth by Francis Kinwelmarsh; and, as in Gorboduc, each Act is preceded by a dumb-show. The versification presents nothing worthy of remark in comparison with that of Norton and Sackville: it is fully equal to theirs, though much less has been said about it. It is the earliest known attempt to domesticate the Greek Drama on the English stage.

The example of making English dramas out of Italian novels appears to have been first set, unless we should except the lost play of Romeo and Juliet, in 1568, when The Tragedy of Tancred and Gismund was performed before Elizabeth at the Inner Temple. It was the work of five persons, who were probably members of that Inn; each of them contributing an Act, and one of them being Christopher Hatton, afterwards known as Elizabeth's "dancing Chancellor." Except in the article of blank-verse, the writers seem to have taken Gorboduc as their model; each Act beginning with a dumb-show, and ending with a chorus. The play was founded on one of Boccaccio's tales, an English version of which had recently appeared in Paynter's Palace of Pleasure.

To the same period we are to reckon ten dramas translated from the Latin of Seneca, which no doubt had some influence in forming the public taste. Three of these translations, *Troas*, *Thyestes*, and *Hercules Furens*, severally published in 1559, 1560, and 1561, were by Jasper Heywood, son of the celebrated John Heywood. Four of them were by John Studley, *Medea* and *Agamemnon*, printed in 1566, and *Hippolytus* and *Hercules Oetæus*. *Œdipus*, by Alexander Neville, came out in 1563. The other two were *Octavia*, by Thomas Nuce, entered at the Stationers' in 1566; and *Thebais*, by Thomas Newton. The whole set were printed together in quarto, in 1581. Nine of them are in Alexandrines of fourteen syllables, and all are in rhyme. Heywood and Studley take rank above mere trans-

lators, in that they did not tie themselves to the originals, but made changes and added whole scenes, as they thought fit; which is remarked by Warton as showing that dramatic writers "now began to think for themselves, and that they were not always implicitly enslaved to the prescribed letter of their models." The pieces do not seem to require further notice.

In the years 1568 and 1580, inclusive, the accounts of the Revels furnish the titles of fifty-two dramas performed at Court, none of which have survived, save as some of them may have served as the basis of plays written afterwards, and bearing other names. Of these fifty-two pieces, so far as we may judge from the titles, a few of which were given in the preceding Chapter, eighteen appear to have been on classical subjects; twenty-one, on subjects from modern history, romance, and other tales; while seven may be classed as comedies, and six as Moral-plays. It is also to be noted, that at this time the Master of the Revels was wont to call different sets of players before him, hear their pieces rehearsed, and then choose such of them as he judged fit for royal ears; which infers that the Court rather followed than led the popular taste, since most of the plays so used were doubtless already known on the public stage.

This may probably be taken as a fair indication how far the older species of drama still kept its place on the stage. Moral-plays lingered in occasional use till long after this period; and we even hear of Miracles performed now and then till after the death of Elizabeth. And this was much more the case, no doubt, in the country towns and villages than in the metropolis, as the growing life of thought could not but beat lustiest at the heart; and of course all the rest of the nation could not bridle Innovation, spurred as she was by the fierce competition of wit in London. Certain parts, however, of the Morals had vigour enough, it appears, to propagate themselves into the drama of comedy and tragedy after the main body of them had been withdrawn.

An apt instance of this is furnished in A Knack to Know a Knave, entered at the Stationers' in 1593, but written several years before. It was printed in 1594, and the title-page states that it had been acted "sundry times by Edward Alleyn and his company," and that it contained "Kempe's applauded merriments of the men of Gotham." Alleyn, the founder of Dulwich College, was the leading actor of the Lord Admiral's company; and after the death of Richard Tarlton, in 1588, William Kempe, who at a later period was of the same company with Shakespeare, bore the palm as an actor of comic parts. The play is made up partly of allegorical personages, and partly of historical; the chief of the latter being, King Edgar, St. Dunstan, Ethenwald, Osrick, and his daughter Alfrida. From reports of Alfrida's beauty, Edgar gets so enamoured of her, that he sends Ethenwald, Earl of Cornwall, to court her for him. The Earl, being already in love with the lady, is distressed that he cannot court her for his own bride: he arrives, is introduced by her father; his passion gets the better of his commission; he wooes and wins her for himself, and has her father's full consent. He returns to Edgar; tells him she will do very well for an earl, but not for a king: Edgar distrusts his report, and goes to see for himself, when Ethenwald tries to pass off the kitchen-maid upon him as Alfrida: the trick is detected; Dunstan counsels forgiveness; whereupon the King generously renounces his claim. There is but one scene of "Kempe's applauded merriments" in the play, and this consists merely of a blundering dispute, whether a mock petition touching the consumption of ale shall be presented to the King by a cobbler or a smith.

As to the allegorical persons, it is worthy notice that several of these have individual designations, as if the author, whoever he might be, had some vague ideas of representative character, — that is, persons standing for classes, yet clothed with individuality, — but lacked the skill to work them out. Such is the Bailiff of Hexham, who represents

the iniquities of local magistrates. He has four sons,—Walter, representing the frauds of farmers; Priest, the sins of the clergy; Coneycatcher, the tricks of cheats; and Perin, the vices of courtiers. Besides these, we have Honesty, whose business it is to expose crimes and vices. The Bailiff, on his death-bed, calls his sons around him, and makes a speech to them:

> "Here have I been a bailiff threescore years,
> And us'd exaction on the dwellers-by;
> For, if a man were brought before my face
> For cozenage, theft, or living on his wit,
> For counterfeiting any hand or seal,
> The matter heard, the witness brought to me,
> I took a bribe and set the prisoners free.
> So by such dealings I have got my wealth."

The Devil makes his appearance several times, and, when the old Bailiff dies, carries him off. At last, Honesty exposes the crimes of all classes to the King, who has justice done on their representatives. This part of the play seems intended as a satire on the vices of Court and country.

The piece is in blank-verse, and in respect of versification makes considerable improvement on the specimens hitherto noticed. A short passage, which is all we have room for, will show that the writer was not wholly a stranger to right ideas of character and poetry. It is where Ethenwald, on being introduced by Lord Osrick to his innocent daughter, complains of a "painful rheum" in his eyes, so that he cannot look up:

> "*Osrick.* I am sorry that my house should cause your grief.—
> Daughter, if you have any skill at all,
> I pray you use your cunning with the earl,
> And see if you can ease him of his pain.
> *Alfrida.* Father, such skill as I receiv'd of late
> By reading many pretty-penn'd receipts,
> Both for the ache of head and pain of eyes,
> I will, if so it please the earl to accept it,
> Endeavour what I may to comfort him.—

My lord, I have waters of approved worth,
And such as are not common to be found;
Any of which, if please your Honour use them,
I am in hope will help you to your sight"

CHAPTER V.

SHAKESPEARE'S IMMEDIATE PREDECESSORS.

TOUCHING the general state of the Drama a few years before Shakespeare took hold of it, we have some contemporary notices which must now be produced. In 1578, George Whetstone published his History of Promos and Cassandra, a drama in two parts, upon which the Poet founded his Measure for Measure, as may be seen at length in our Introduction to that play. In the Dedication of his work, Whetstone has the following passage, where he evidently has in view some particular plays which he had seen performed:

"The Englishman, in this quality, is most vain, indiscreet, and out of order. He first grounds his work on impossibilities; then in three hours runs he through the world, marries, gets children, makes children men, men to conquer kingdoms, murder monsters, and bringeth gods from heaven, and fetcheth devils from hell. And, that which is worst, their ground is not so unperfect, as their working indiscreet; not weighing, so the people laugh, though they laugh them, for their follies, to scorn: many times, to make mirth, they make a clown companion with a king; in their grave councils they allow the advice of fools; yea, they use one order of speech for all persons, — a gross indecorum; for a crow will ill counterfeit the nightingale's sweet voice: even so affected speech doth misbecome a clown. For, to work a

comedy kindly, grave old men should instruct, young men should show the imperfections of youth, strumpets should be lascivious, boys unhappy, and clowns should speak disorderly; intermingling all these actions in such sort as the grave matter may instruct, and the pleasant delight; for without this change the attention would be small, and the liking less."

Some further points of information are supplied by Stephen Gosson, whose School of Abuse, which was a general invective against the stage, came out in 1579. Only two years before, Gosson himself had written two plays, one called The Comedy of Captain Mario, the other a Moral-play entitled Praise at Parting. He also avows himself the author of an historical play called Catiline's Conspiracies, of which he speaks as follows: "The whole mark I shot at in that work was, to show the reward of traitors in Catiline, and the necessary government of learned men in the person of Cicero, which foresees every danger that is likely to happen, and forestalls it continually ere it take effect." And he mentions several other dramas; one called The Blacksmith's Daughter, setting forth "the treachery of Turks, the honourable bounty of a noble mind, and the shining of virtue in distress;" also, one called The Jew and Ptolemy, having for its subject "the greediness of worldly choosers, and the bloody mind of usurers." Besides these, he speaks of "two prose books played at the Bell Savage," describing "how seditious estates with their own devices, false friends with their own swords, and rebellious commons with their own snares, are overthrown." From all these he admits that good moral lessons might be drawn, and so marks them out for exception from his attack. From his specifying two of them as "*prose* books," it is to be presumed that all the others were in verse.

The School of Abuse was taken in hand by Thomas Lodge, and in 1581 Gosson made a rejoinder in his Plays Confuted in Five Actions, where we have the following

"Sometimes you shall see nothing but the adventures of an amorous knight, passing from country to country for the love of his lady, encountering many a terrible monster made of brown paper; and at his return is so wonderfully changed, that he cannot be known but by some posy in his tablet, or by a broken ring, or a handkerchief, or a piece of a cockle-shell." Again, he refers to the mode of treating historical subjects, thus: "If a true history be taken in hand, it is made like our shadows, longest at the rising and falling of the sun, shortest of all at high noon. For the poets drive it most commonly unto such points as may best show the majesty of their pen in tragical speeches, or set the hearers agog with discourses of love, or paint a few antics to fit their own humours with scoffs and taunts, or bring in a show to furnish the stage when it is bare: when the matter of itself comes short of this, they follow the practice of the cobbler and set their teeth to the leather to pull it out."

In another part of the same tract, he gives the following account of the sources whence dramatic writers commonly derived their plots and stories: "I may boldly say it, because I have seen it, that The Palace of Pleasure, The Golden Ass, the Ethiopian History, Amadis of France, and The Round Table, bawdy comedies in Latin, French, Italian, and Spanish, have been thoroughly ransacked, to furnish the play-houses in London." This shows very clearly what direction the public taste was then taking; that the matter and method of the old dramas, and all "such musty fopperies of antiquity," would no longer go; and that there was an eager and pressing demand, not knowing exactly what to seek, nor how to come by it, for something wherein men might find, or at least fancy, themselves touched by the real vital currents of nature. And, as prescription was thus set aside, and art still ungrown, the materials of history and romance, foreign tales and plays, any thing that could furnish incidents and a plot, were blindly and ignorantly pressed into the service.

In the case of Gosson, some allowance may be due for the exaggerations of puritanical invective. But no such drawback can attach to the statements of Sir Philip Sidney, whose Apology for Poetry, though not printed till 1595, must have been written before 1586, in which year the author died. On the subject of dramatic poetry, he has the following:

"Our tragedies and comedies are not without cause cried out against, observing neither rules of honest civility nor skilful poetry, excepting Gorboduc, (again I say, of those that I have seen,) which notwithstanding it is full of stately speeches and well-sounding phrases, climbing to the height of Seneca's style, and as full of notable morality, which it doth most delightfully teach, and so obtain the very end of poesy; yet, in truth, it is very defectious in the circumstances; which grieves me, because it might not remain as an exact model of all tragedies: for it is faulty both in place and time, the two necessary companions of all corporal actions. . . .

"But, if it be so in Gorboduc, how much more in all the rest, where you shall have Asia of the one side, and Afric of the other, and so many other under kingdoms, that the player, when he comes in, must ever begin with telling where he is, or else the tale will not be conceived. Now you shall have three ladies walk to gather flowers, and then we must believe the stage to be a garden: by and by we hear news of shipwreck in the same place; then we are to blame if we accept it not for a rock. Upon the back of that, comes out a hideous monster with fire and smoke, and then the miserable beholders are bound to take it for a cave; while in the mean time two armies fly in, represented with four swords and bucklers, and then what hard heart will not receive it for a pitched field? Now, of time they are much more liberal: for ordinary it is, that two young princes fall in love, after many traverses she is got with child, delivered of a fair boy; he is lost, groweth a man, falleth in love, and is ready

to get another child, and all this in two hours' space: which how absurd it is in sense, even sense may imagine, and art hath taught, and all examples justified. . . .

"But, besides these gross absurdities, how all their plays be neither right tragedies nor right comedies, mingling kings and clowns, not because the matter so carrieth it, but thrust in the clown by head and shoulders to play a part in majestical matters with neither decency nor discretion; so as neither admiration and commiseration nor right sportfulness is by their mongrel tragi-comedy obtained."

From all these extracts it is evident enough that very little if any heed was then paid to the rules of dramatic propriety and decorum. It was not *merely* that the unities of time and place were set at nought, but that events and persons were thrown together without *any* order or law, bundled up as it were at random; unconnected with each other save to the senses, while at the same time according to sense they stood far asunder. It is also manifest that the principles of the Gothic Drama in respect of general structure and composition, in disregard of the minor unities, and in the free blending and interchange of the comic and tragic elements where "the matter so carrieth it," were thoroughly established; though as yet those principles were not moulded up with sufficient art to shield them from the just censure and ridicule of sober judgment and good taste. Here was a great triumph to be achieved; greater, perhaps, than any art then known was sufficient for. Without this, any thing like an original or national Drama was impossible: all was bound to be mere mechanical repetition of what, elsewhere and in its day, had been a living thing. Sir Philip saw the chaos about him; but he did not see, and none could foresee, the creation that was to issue from it. He would have spoken very differently, no doubt, had he lived to see the intrinsic relations of character and passion, the vital sequence of mental and moral development, set forth in such clearness and strength, the whole fabric resting on

such solid grounds of philosophy, and charged with such cunning efficacies of poetry, that breaches of local or temporal succession either pass without notice, or are noticed only for the gain of truth and nature that is made through them. For the laws of sense hold only as the thoughts are absorbed in what is sensuous and definite; and the very point was, to lift the mind above this by working on its imaginative forces, and penetrating it with the light of relations more inward and essential.

At all events, it was by going ahead, and not by backing out, that modern thought was to find its proper dramatic expression. The foundation of principles was settled, and stood ready to be built upon whenever the right workman should come. Moreover, public taste was eager for something warm with life, so much so indeed as to keep running hither and thither after the shabbiest semblances of it, though still unable to set up its rest with them. The national mind, in discarding, or rather outgrowing the old species of drama, had worked itself into contact with nature, and found its way to the right sort of materials. But to reproduce nature in mental forms, requires great power of art, much greater, perhaps, than minds educated amidst works of art can well conceive. This art was the thing still wanting.

Which brings us to the subject of Shakespeare's immediate predecessors. For here, again, the process was a gradual one, and various hands were required to its completion. Neither may we affirm that nothing had yet been done towards organising the collected materials; far from it: but the methods and faculties of art were scattered here and there; different parts of the thing had been hit upon severally, and worked out one by one; so that it yet remained to draw them all up and carry them on together. It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to determine exactly by whom the first steps were taken in this operation. But all of much consequence, that was effected before we come to Shakespeare, may be found in connection with the three names of George Peele, Robert Greene, and Christopher Marlowe.

The time and place of Peele's birth have not been fully ascertained. But it appears from the matriculation-books of the University that he was a member of Pembroke College, Oxford, in 1564; so that his birth could not well have been later than 1552 or 1553. He took his first degree in 1577, and became Master of Arts in 1579. Anthony Wood tells us that "he was esteemed a most noted poet in the University." Soon after taking his master's degree, he is supposed to have gone to London as a literary adventurer. Dissipation and debauchery were especially rife at that time among the authors by profession, who hung in large numbers upon the metropolis, and haunted its taverns and ordinaries; and it is but too certain, that Peele plunged deeply into the vices of his class. That he tried himself more or less on the stage, is probable, though Mr. Dyce is very confident that he was never engaged as a regular actor. The date of his death is unknown, but Meres, in his *Palladis Tamia*, 1598, tells us that "as Anacreon died by the pot, so George Peele by the pox."

Peele's Arraignment of Paris was printed in 1584, the title-page informing us that it had been "presented before the Queen's Majesty by the children of her Chapel." That it was his *first* dramatic piece we learn from Thomas Nash, who, in an epistle prefixed to Greene's Menaphon, 1587, after referring to Peele adds the following: "I dare commend him unto all that know him, as the chief supporter of pleasance now living, the Atlas of poetry, and *primus verborum artifex*; whose *first increase*, the Arraignment of Paris, might plead in your opinions his pregnant dexterity of wit and manifold variety of invention, wherein, *me judice*, he goeth a step beyond all that write." The piece is indeed vastly superior to any thing that preceded it. It is avowedly a pastoral drama, and sets forth a whole troop of gods and goddesses: there is nothing in it that can properly be called delineation of character; but it displays large powers of poetry; it abounds in natural and well-proportioned senti-

ment; thoughts and images seem to rise up fresh from the writer's own observation, and not merely gathered at second-hand: a considerable portion of it is in blank-verse, but the author uses various measures, in all of which his versification is graceful and flowing. A single short specimen will show something of this: it is a speech made by Flora to the country gods:

"Not Iris, in her pride and bravery,
Adorns her arch with such variety;
Nor doth the milk-white way, in frosty night,
Appear so fair and beautiful in sight,
As do these fields and groves and sweetest bowers,
Bestrew'd and deck'd with parti colour'd flowers.
Along the bubbling brooks, and silver, glide,
That at the bottom do in silence slide:
The watery flowers and lilies on the banks,
Like blazing comets, burgeon all in ranks:
Under the hawthorn and the poplar tree,
Where sacred Phœbe may delight to be,
The primrose, and the purple hyacinth,
The dainty violet, and the wholesome minth,
The double daisy, and the cowslip, queen
Of summer flowers, do overpeer the green;
And round about the valley as ye pass,
Ye may ne see for peeping flowers the grass:
That well the mighty Juno, and the rest,
May boldly think to be a welcome guest
On Ida hills, when, to approve the thing,
The queen of flowers prepares a second spring."

The plot of the piece is simply this: Juno, Pallas, and Venus get at strife who shall have the apple of discord which Ate has thrown amongst them, with a direction that it be given to the fairest. As each thinks herself the fairest, they agree to refer the question to Paris, the Trojan shepherd; and he, after mature deliberation, awards the golden ball to Venus. An appeal is taken from his judgment: he is arraigned before Jupiter in a synod of the gods for having rendered a partial and unjust sentence; but he defends himself so well that their godships are at loss what to do. At last, by Apollo's advice, the matter is referred to Diana, who

as she wants no lovers, cares little for her own beauty Diana sets aside all their claims, and awards the apple to Queen Elizabeth; which verdict gives perfect satisfaction all round. A part of Diana's speech must suffice to show the author's hand at blank-verse:

> "There wons within these pleasant shady woods,
> Where neither storm nor sun's distemperature
> Have power to hurt by cruel heat or cold;
> Under the climate of the milder heaven,
> Where seldom lights Jove's angry thunderbolt,
> For favour of that sovereign earthly peer;
> Where whistling winds make music 'mong the trees,
> Far from disturbance of our country gods;
> Amidst the cypress springs a gracious nymph,
> That honours Dian for her chastity,
> And likes the labours well of Phœbe's groves:
> The place Elizium hight, and of the place
> Her name that governs there Eliza is;
> A kingdom that may well compare with mine,
> An ancient seat of kings, a second Troy,
> Ycompass'd round with a commodious sea.
> She giveth laws of justice and of peace;
> And on her head, as fits her fortune best,
> She wears a wreath of laurel, gold, and palm;
> Her robes of purple and of scarlet dye;
> Her veil of white, as best befits a maid:
> Her ancestors live in the house of fame:
> She giveth arms of happy victory,
> And flowers to deck her lions, crown'd with gold."

Another drama commonly ascribed to Peele was printed in 1594, a part of the title-page reading thus: "The Battle of Alcazar, fought in Barbary, between Sebastian king of Portugal and Abdilmelec king of Morocco; with the death of Captain Stukeley: As it was sundry times played by the Lord High Admiral's servants." The piece was written, however, as early as 1589; for in that year Peele published a farewell to "Sir John Norris and Sir Francis Drake, knights, and all their brave and resolute followers," at their setting out on the disastrous expedition against Portugal; and among other things he clearly alludes to the play:

"Bid theatres and proud tragedians,
Bid Mahomet and mighty Tamburlaine,
King Charlemagne, Tom Stukeley, and the rest,
Adieu. To arms, to arms, to glorious arms!"

On the other hand, the play alludes to the wreck of the Spanish Armada, in 1588, which ascertains the writing to have been after that event. It is a strange performance, and nearly as worthless as strange; being full of tearing rant and fustian; while the action, if such it may be called, goes it with prodigious licence, jumping to and fro between Portugal and Africa without remorse. The evidence is strong for ascribing it to Peele, still we have some difficulty in believing it to be his: certainly it is not written in his native vein, nor, as to that matter, in any body's else; for it betrays at every step an ambitious imitation of Marlowe, wherein, as usually happens, the faults of the model are exaggerated, and its excellences not reached. Peele could not have been cast into such an ecstasy of rant and disorder but from a wild attempt to rival the author of Tamburlaine, which is several times referred to in the piece.

Stukeley is the right hero of the play. He was a crazy adventurer, who perished at the battle of Alcazar in 1578. Fuller calls him a "bubble of emptiness and meteor of ostentation." At the time of the play the story was doubtless well remembered, and was probably chosen, because likely to be popular, and because it gave an opportunity to abuse the Romanists, to compliment the Queen, and to fill the stage with noisy incidents and persons. The play is all in blank-verse, with occasional couplets interspersed. The following, besides being one of the best passages in itself, is probably the most characteristic of the person: it is from one of the hero's speeches:

"There shall no action pass my hand or sword,
That cannot make a step to gain a crown;
No word shall pass the office of my tongue,
That sounds not of affection to a crown;
No thought have being in my lordly breast,

That works not every way to win a crown:
Deeds, words, and thoughts shall all be as a kings;
My chiefest company shall be with kings,
And my deserts shall counterpoise a king's;
Why should I not, then, look to be a king?
King of a molehill had I rather be,
Than the richest subject of a monarchy:
Huff it, brave mind! and never cease t'aspire,
Before thou reign sole king of thy desire."

The Famous Chronicle of King Edward the First came from the press in 1593. This was probably written later than the preceding, and is much superior to it every way, though less Peele-like than The Arraignment of Paris. Still its chief claim to notice is as an early attempt in the Historical Drama which Shakespeare brought to such perfection. The character of Edward is portrayed with considerable spirit and truth to history, and is perhaps Peele's best effort in that line. On the other hand, Queen Elinor of Castile is shockingly disfigured, and this, not only in contempt of history, which might be borne with if it really enriched the scene, but to the total disorganising of the part itself: the purpose of which disfigurement was, no doubt, to gratify the bitter national antipathy to the Spaniards. Peele seems to have been incapable of the proper grace and delectation of comedy: nevertheless, the part of Prince Lluellen, of Wales, and his adherents, who figure pretty largely, and sometimes in the disguise of Robin Hood and his merry men, shows something of comic talent, and adds not a little to the entertainment of the performance. The other comic portions have nothing to recommend them. The serious parts are all in blank-verse; the others mostly in prose.

Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamydes is included among Peele's works by Mr. Dyce, though, we confess, on what seems to us rather slender evidence. The oldest known copies of it are dated 1599, but Mr. Collier thinks it was written before 1590. It goes on seven-feet rhyming Alexandrines, and consists mainly of the loves and adventures of knights-errant, the story being taken, no doubt, from the fields of old

romance. Therewithal, it has some features proper to a Moral-play, one of the persons being named Subtle-shift, who answers to the old Vice: besides, there are personifications of Rumour, who carries news to the different parties, and of God's Providence, who rescues one of the heroines from death. We have, also, a cowardly enchanter, Bryar Sansfoy, who keeps a horrible dragon in the Forest of Marvels; the head of which dragon has to be cut off by one of the knights for a present to his lady-love. Sir Clamydes having slain the beast, Sansfoy forthwith casts him into a sleep, steals his armour, hastens to the Court of Denmark, and palms himself off upon Juliana as her true knight. The hero clips it after him, but on arriving is not recognized by his mistress, till a tournament is appointed, when Sansfoy, rather than fight, confesses his fraud. The best part of the piece relates to Neronis, a prineess who follows Sir Clyomon, and endures sundry hardships, in the disguise of a page. Alexander the Great is one of the characters. The play does not deserve further notice: we can scarce believe that Peele wrote it.

The Old Wives' Tale, printed in 1595, is little worth mention save as having probably contributed somewhat to one of the noblest and sweetest poems ever written. Two brothers are represented as wandering in quest of their sister, whom an enchanter named Saerapant has imprisoned; they call her name, and Echo replies. Seeing what they are at, Sacrapant gives her a potion that suspends her reason, and induces self-oblivion. His magical powers depend on a wreath which encireles his head, and on a light enclosed in glass which he keeps hidden under the turf. The brothers afterwards meet with an old man, also skilled in magic, who enables them to recover their sister. A Spirit in the likeness of a beautiful young page comes to Sacrapant, tears off his wreath, and kills him. Still the sister remains enchanted, and cannot be released till the glass is broken and the light extinguished, which can only be done

by a Lady who is neither maid, wife, nor widow. The Spirit blows a magical horn, and the Lady appears, breaks the glass, and puts out the light. A curtain being then withdrawn discovers the sister asleep: she is disenchanted by being spoken to thrice; joins her brothers, and returns home with them; and the Spirit vanishes into the earth.

The resemblances to Milton's Comus need not be specified. The difference of the two pieces in all points of execution is literally immense. Mr. Dyce has the following just remarks on the subject: "Milton, it is well known, read with attention the writings of his predecessors, and not unfrequently adopted their conceptions, which, after passing through his mighty mind, came forth purified from all dross, and glowing with new beauties. That, for the composition of his enchanting Masque, a portion of The Old Wives' Tale was submitted to this intellectual process, there is, I think, great reason to believe: Sacrapant, Delia, her Brothers, and Jack, when divested of their meanness and vulgarity, and arrayed in all the poetic loveliness that the highest genius could pour around them, assumed the forms of Comus, the Lady, her Brothers, and the Attendant Spirit."

The Love of King David and Fair Bethsabe is generally regarded as Peele's masterpiece. Here, again, we breathe the genuine air of nature and simplicity. The piece is all in blank-verse, which, though wanting in variety of movement, is replete with melody. There is, perhaps, a somewhat too literal adherence to the Scripture narrative, and very little art used in the ordering and disposing of the materials, for Peele was neither strong nor happy in the gift of invention; but the characters generally are seized in their most peculiar traits, and presented with a good degree of vigour and discrimination; while at the same time the more prominent features are not worked into disproportion with the other parts. Nathan's artful reproof of David is a favourable specimen of the author's style. The Prophet is made to speak as follows:

"Thus Nathan saith unto his lord the King:
There were two men, both dwellers in one town;
The one was mighty, and exceeding rich
In oxen, sheep, and cattle of the field;
The other poor, having nor ox, nor calf,
Nor other cattle, save one little lamb,
Which he had bought and nourish'd by the hand;
And it grew up, and fed with him and his,
And ate and drank, as he and his were wont,
And in his bosom slept, and was to live
As was his daughter or his dearest child.
There came a stranger to this wealthy man;
And he refus'd and spar'd to take his own,
Or of his store to dress or make him meat,
But took the poor man's sheep," &c.

On the whole, Campbell's elegant criticism of the piece, though perhaps slightly overcharged, may fitly go in company with the subject: "We may justly cherish the memory of Peele as the oldest genuine dramatic poet in our language. His David and Bethsabe is the earliest fountain of pathos and harmony that can be traced in our dramatic poetry. His fancy is rich, and his feeling tender; and his conceptions of dramatic character have no inconsiderable mixture of solid veracity and ideal beauty. There is no such sweetness of versification and imagery to be found in our blank-verse anterior to Shakespeare."

Still it is not to be denied that Peele's contributions towards the Drama were mainly in the single article of poetry: in the development of character, and in the high art of dramatic composition and organisation, he added but very little: his genius was far unequal to this great task, and his judgment still more so. And his literary efforts were doubtless rendered fitful and unsteady by his habits of profligacy; which may explain why it was that he who could do so well, sometimes did so meanly. Often, no doubt, when reduced to extreme shifts he patched up his matter loosely and trundled it off in haste, to replenish his wasted means and start him on a fresh course of riot and debauchery. Mr. Dyce is strongly of the opinion that not more

than half of his dramatic works "has survived the ravages of time." We hear of a play by him, entitled the Turkish Mahomet and Hiren the Fair Greek, but nothing more is known of it. Some fragments, also, of a pastoral drama, called The Hunting of Cupid, are preserved among the manuscript selections of Drummond of Hawthornden. It was licenced for the press in 1591, but no copy has come to light.

Robert Greene, though inferior to Peele as a whole, surpassed him in fertility and aptness of invention, in quickness and luxuriance of fancy, and in the right seizing and placing of character, especially for comic effect. In his day he was vastly notorious both as a writer and a man: this cheap counterfeit of fame he achieved with remarkable ease, and seems not to have coveted any thing better. He was born at Norwich, in what year, is not known; took his first degree at St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1578, proceeded Master of Arts at Clare-hall in 1583, and was incorporated at Oxford in 1588; after which he was rather fond of styling himself "Master of Arts in both Universities." It is highly probable that he was for some time in holy orders; for a person of his name held the vicarage of Tollesbury in 1584; and in that year he published a moral discourse entitled The Mirror of Modesty, on the story of Susanna and the Elders. He also translated a funeral sermon by Pope Gregory XIII., and published it in 1585; by which time his unfitness for the Ministry of the Church had probably become so apparent as to cause his ejection from office; for in the title-page of his *Planetomachia*, also printed that year, he calls himself "Student in Physic." Soon after this time, if not before, he betook himself to London, where he speedily sank into the worst type of a literary adventurer. Henceforth his life seems to have been one continual spasm, plunging hither and thither in transports of wild debauchery and as wild repentance.

Between the taking of his first and second degrees, in

1578 and 1583, Greene travelled into Spain, Italy, and other parts of the Continent, where, according to his own statement, he "saw and practised such villainy as is abominable to declare." This is quoted from a tract entitled "The Repentance of Robert Greene, wherein by himself is laid open his loose life." He continues his self-anatomy as follows: "After I had by degrees proceeded Master of Arts, I left the University, and away to London, where I became an author of plays and a penner of love-pamphlets, so that I soon grew famous in that quality, that who for that trade grown so ordinary about London as Robin Greene? Young yet in years, though old in wickedness, I began to resolve that there was nothing bad that was profitable: whereupon I grew so rooted in all mischief, that I had as great delight in wickedness as sundry hath in godliness; and as much felicity I took in villainy as others had in honesty." From this, and much more in the like strain, it would seem that in his repentant moods the wretched man took a morbid pleasure in hanging over and displaying his moral blotches and sores. He died in 1592, eaten up with diseases purchased by sin. The immediate cause of his death is thus stated by Meres in his *Palladis Tamia*, 1598: "Robert Greene died of a surfeit taken at pickled herring and Rhenish wine, as witnesseth Thomas Nash, who was at the fatal banquet." Mr. Dyce, in his memoir of Greene, speaks of the event with real pathos: "There have been," says he, "too many of the Muses' sons whose vices have conducted them to shame and sorrow; but none, perhaps, who have sunk to deeper degradation and misery than the subject of this memoir."

Much, if not most, of Greene's notoriety during his lifetime grew from his prose writings, which, in the form of tracts, were rapidly thrown off one after another, and were well adapted both in matter and style to catch a loud but transient popularity. One of them had the high honour of being laid under contribution by Shakespeare for The Win-

ter's Tale, and some account of it may be seen in our Introduction to that charming play. In these pieces, generally, the most striking features are a constant affecting of the euphuistic style which John Lyly had rendered popular, and a certain redundancy or incontinence of words and metaphors and classical allusions, the issue of a full and ready memory unrestrained in its discharges by taste or judgment: the writer gallops on from page to page with unflagging volubility, himself evidently captivated with the rolling sound of his own sentences. Still his descriptions are often charged with a warmth and height of colouring that could not fail to take prodigiously in an age when severity or delicacy of taste was none of the commonest. And sometimes, when he is thoroughly in earnest, as in the address printed along with his Groatsworth of Wit, and quoted in our third Chapter of the Poet's Life, his style fairly degenerates into eloquence, or something bordering upon it. Several of his prose pieces are liberally interspersed with passages of poetry, in many of which his fluent and teeming fancy is seen to great advantage. He uses in these a variety of measures, and most of them with an easy and natural skill, while his cast of imagery and course of thought show him by no means a stranger to the true springs of poetic sweetness and grace, though he never rises to any thing like grandeur or pathos.

At what time Greene began to write for the stage, is not certainly known. Up to the time of his going to London, we have met with but three dramas composed, wholly or partly, in blank-verse. These are Gorboduc, Jocasta, and The Arraignment of Paris, neither of which was written expressly for the public stage, *but only for use in private or at Court;* though, as all three of them were in print, they may have been used more or less by some of the theatrical companies. The point now is, when blank-verse first came to be used in *plays designed for public representation*? Gosson, in his Plays Confuted, 1581, tells us that "poets send their verses to the stage upon such feet as continually

are *rolled up in rhyme*." It is nearly certain that Greene's earliest plays were in rhyme, though none such of his writing have survived, and that they did not succeed. For in 1587 was published his Menaphon, prefixed to which were the following lines by Thomas Brabine in praise of the author:

> "Come forth, you wits that vaunt the pomp of speech,
> And strive to thunder from a *stageman's* throat!
> View Menaphon, a note beyond your reach,
> Whose sight will make your *drumming descant* dote.
> *Players*, avaunt! you know not to delight:—
> Welcome, sweet shepherd, worth a scholar's sight."

The words *drumming descant*, as will more fully appear hereafter, were most likely meant as a fling at blank-verse, which had lately been tried with great success on the public stage, but which the writer and his friends regarded as a naughty innovation.

In the same work of Greene's we have an edifying epistle by Thomas Nash, addressed "to the Gentlemen Students of both Universities." Nash was an intimate friend of Greene's, so far as two such rascals could be friends: he was entered at St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1585, but had to leave in 1587 without his degree; whereupon he joined his old companion in London, who had already become famous for his pamphleteering fertility. In the forementioned epistle we have the following: "Give me the man whose extemporal vein in any humour will excel our greatest *art-masters'* deliberate thoughts; whose inventions, quicker than his eye, will challenge the proudest rhetorician to the contention of the like perfection with the like expedition." From which it is plain enough that Nash sided rather hotly with Greene in the question at issue, and affected to sneer at some who had got the start of him in the drama, that if he could not keep up with them on the stage, it was because he was too bright and quick for the place; and that they were stupid cocks to be crowing over him in that, since he altogether overcrowed them in something far better. As

Nash's developments of genius had probably been such as to convince his teachers that the University could add nothing to him, it was but natural that he should think himself too smart to need their foolish *degrees;* and in his *art-masters* we may detect a fleer of envy at those who had been so slow-witted as to require the usual academic passports.

Be this as it may, the same epistle has another passage which leaves no doubt that there was a fiery feud, and that the marked success of somebody's blank-verse was the particular fuel of it. "I am not ignorant," says Nash, "how eloquent our gowned age has grown of late, so that every mechanical mate abhorreth the English he was born to, and plucks, with a solemn periphrasis, his *ut vales* from the inkhorn: which I impute not so much to the perfection of arts, as to the servile imitation of vainglorious tragedians, who contend not so seriously to excel in action, as to embowel the clouds in a speech of comparison; thinking themselves more than initiated in poets' immortality, if they but once get Boreas by the beard, and the heavenly Bull by the dewlap. But herein I cannot so fully bequeath them to folly, as their idiot art-masters that intrude themselves to our ears as the alchymists of eloquence, who, mounted on the stage of arrogance, *think to outbrave better pens with the swelling bombast of bragging blank-verse.* Indeed, it may be, the engrafted overflow of some kill-cow conceit, that overcloyeth their imagination with a more-than-drunken resolution, being not extemporal in the invention of any other means to vent their manhood, commits the digestion of their choleric incumbrances to the spacious volubility of a *drumming de casyllabon.* Amongst this kind of men that repose eternity in the mouth of a player, I can but engross some deep-read school-men or grammarians, who, having no more learning in their skull than will serve to take up a commodity, nor art in their brain than was nourished in a serving-man's idleness, will take upon them to be the ironical censors of all, when God and poetry doth know they are the simplest of all.

The plain English of this muddy splenctic eruption probably is, that Greene had written some dramas in rhyme, which were not well liked by the players; therefore the players were to be sneered at by disappointed rivalry as "vainglorious tragedians," who bethumped the stage with tempestuous verbiage: that some dramas from another hand, in blank-verse, had met with great success; therefore they were to be stigmatized as "swelling bombast" stilted on "a drumming decasyllabon," or rhymeless ten-syllable verse, that had no strength but what came from the lungs of those who mouthed it to the public: and that the author of these dramas, though a Master of Arts, showed no more of learning or art in his writing, than might be picked up in the odd hours of a common hand-workman.

Further light is thrown on the subject by an address "to the Gentlemen Readers" prefixed to Greene's Perimedes the Blacksmith, which came out in 1588; where the writer, after referring to the usual motto of his tracts, *omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci*, adds the following: "Lately two gentlemen poets had it (the motto) in derision, for that *I could not make my verses jet upon the stage in tragical buskins*, every word filling the mouth like the fa-burden of Bow-Bell, *daring God out of heaven with that atheist Tamburlaine*, or blaspheming with the mad priest of the sun. But let me rather openly pocket up the ass at Diogenes' hand, than wantonly set out such impious instances of intolerable poetry, such mad and scoffing poets, that have prophetical spirits, as bred of Merlin's race. If there be any in England *that set the end of scholarism in an English blank-verse*, I think either it is the humour of a novice, that tickles them with self-love, or too much frequenting the hothouse hath sweat out all the greatest part of their wits."

It would seem from this that Greene and Nash, in return for their attack on blank-verse, had been twitted of not being able to write it. The "atheist Tamburlaine" of course refers to Marlowe's tragedy with that title. "The mad

priest of the sun" was probably a leading character in some drama that has not survived: Mr. Collier conjectures it to have been by Marlowe also. Be that as it may, it is pretty certain that Greene secretly admired Marlowe's dramatic blank-verse, while he publicly flouted it; for his earliest dramas that are known to us were evidently written in imitation of it.

The History of Orlando Furioso, though not printed till 1594, was acted by Lord Strange's men as early as 1591, and was probably not then a new play. The plot of the piece was partly founded on Ariosto's romance, partly invented by Greene himself. The action, if such it may be called, is conducted with the wildest licence, and shows no sense or idea of dramatic truth, but only a prodigious tugging and straining after stage effect; the writer merely trying, apparently, how many men of different nations, European, African, and Asiatic, he could huddle in together, and how much love, rivalry, and fighting he could put them through in the compass of five Acts. As for the fury of Orlando, it is as far from the method of madness, as from the logic of reason; being indeed none other than the incoherent jargon of one endeavouring to talk and act stark nonsense. An analysis of the plot would not pay for the space given to it.

The Comical History of Alphonsus, King of Arragon, belongs, by internal marks, to about the same time as the preceding, though it was not printed, that we know of, till 1597. An outline of the story is soon told. The piece begins with a scene betwixt Carinus, King of Arragon, and his son Alphonsus, in exile; they having been driven from their rightful possessions by the usurper Flaminius. Belinus, King of Naples, being engaged in defending his territory against Flaminius, the Prince enters his army as a common soldier, under a pledge that he shall have whatsoever his sword conquers. In his first battle, he kills the usurper and thereupon claims and receives the kingdom of Arragor

as his conquest. He then demands the submission of Belinus as his vassal: this being refused, Belinus and his ally, the Duke of Milan, are forthwith warred upon, subdued, and their possessions given to two of the victor followers. Belinus having fled to Amurack, the Sultan of Turkey, Alphonsus bestows his kingdom of Arragon upon another of his followers, and knocks up a war against Amurack, determined to seat himself on the throne of the Turkish empire. He succeeds in this, and finally marries Iphigena, the Sultan's daughter, though not till he has first had a personal fight with her for refusing his hand. Even Amurack, the citadel of his heart being stormed by a long tornado of fierce verbiage, at length yields the throne to his Christian son-in-law.

From first to last, the play is crammed brimful of tumult and battle; the scene changing to and fro between Italy and Turkey with most admirable lawlessness; Christians of divers nations, Turks, and a band of Amazonian warriors, bestriding the stage with their monstrous din. Each Act is opened by Mrs. Venus in the quality of Chorus. Medea, also, is employed, to work enchantments: Fausta, the Sultaness, makes her raise Homer's Calchas, who comes forth clad "in a white surplice and a cardinal's mitre," and foretells the issue of the contest between Alphonsus and Amurack.

Both these pieces are mainly in blank-verse, with a frequent interspersing of couplets. In the latter, allusion is made to "the mighty Tamburlaine," thus indicating the height which Greene was striving to reach, if not surpass. In fact, both have plenty of Marlowe's thunder, but none of his lightning. Even the blank-verse reads like that of one who was accustomed to rhyme, so that he could not extricate his current of expression out of its wonted rut. And the versification runs, throughout, in a stilted monotony, the style being bloated big with gas, and made turgid and thick with high-sounding epithets; while, at all times, we have a

perfect flux of classical allusion and learned impertinence. As for truth, nature, character, poetry, we look for them in vain; though there is much, in the stage noise and parade, that might keep the multitude from perceiving the want of them.

The Scottish History of James the Fourth is much superior to both the preceding in almost every respect. It was printed in 1598, and probably written some time after the two already reviewed, as the author seems to have got convinced that imitation of Marlowe was not his line, and that he could do best by working in his own native vein: accordingly, considerable portions of it are in prose and rhyme; while the style throughout appears disciplined into a tolerable degree of sobriety and simplicity. Though purporting to be a history, and though framed upon an historical plan, it has, however, scarce any thing of historical matter except in some of the names.

The piece opens with a comic scene betwixt Oberon, King of Fairies, and Bohan, an old Scottish lord, who, disgusted with the vices of court, city, and country, has withdrawn from the world with his two sons, Slipper and Nano, turned Stoic, lives in a tomb, and talks broad Scotch. King Oberon has nothing in common with the fairy king of A Midsummer-Night's Dream, except the name. He comes at first with an Antic and dances about Bohan's dwelling-place, for the old man's entertainment, promises the smiles of Fortune to his two sons, and between the several Acts makes some fantastical shows with his fairy subjects, which, however, relish as little of the genuine Fairy Land as of common reality. The main body of the drama is a play which Bohan causes to be acted before his fairy entertainers. Bohan introduces it with the following: "Now, King, if thou be a king, I will show thee why I hate the world by demonstration. In the year 1520, was in Scotland a king, overruled with parasites, misled by lust, and many circumstances too long to trattle on now, much like our court of Scotland this

day. That story have I set down. Gang with me to the gallery, and I'll show thee the same in action, by guid fellows of our countrymen; and then, when thou seest that, judge if anv wise man would not leave the world, if he could."

The main plot of the drama is as follows: King James marries Dorothea, the daughter of Arius, king of England. Before the wedding is fairly over, he falls in love with Ida, the Countess of Arran's daughter, makes suit to her, and is rejected with pious horror. He then sets himself to work to get rid of his Queen, turns away from his old counsellors, Douglas, Morton, Ross, and the Bishop of St. Andrews, and gives up his ear to an unscrupulous parasite named Ateukin. Under the secret patronage of Oberon, Bohan's two sons, Nano the dwarf and Slipper the loggerhead, soon get employment and promotion with Ateukin; and, while in his service, they, together with Andrew, another servant of his, carry on some comic proceedings, that are not destitute of merit. Through the parasite's influence and machination, King James forms a scheme for assassinating his Queen: but Sir Bartram detects a cheat which Ateukin is practising on him, and engages Slipper to steal from his master's pocket the instrument of fraud; along with this, Slipper brings to him the King's warrant for murdering the Queen; she is quickly informed of the plot, disguises herself in male attire, and escapes, with Nano in her company. The parasite's agent overtakes her, finds out who she is, fights with her, and leaves her for dead. During the fight, Nano runs for help, and soon returns with Sir Cuthbert Anderson, who takes her to his house, and puts her under the nursing care of his wife, where her wounds are healed, and her health restored; both Sir Cuthbert and Lady Anderson all the while supposing her to be a man.

Meanwhile, Ida gives herself in marriage to Lord Eustace, with whom she has suddenly fallen in love upon his asking her hand. The scene of their first interview has some

very clever poetry: Eustace finds her with a piece of em broidered needle-work in her hand, upon which he has the following:

> "Methinks, in this I see true love in act:
> The woodbines with their leaves do sweetly spread,
> The roses, blushing, prank them in their red;
> No flower but boasts the beauties of the spring;
> This bird hath life indeed, if it could sing.
> What means, fair mistress, had you in this work?"

The King, being thus balked of his guilty purpose, and deserted by his estates, begins to be devoured by compunctions on account of the Queen, whom he believes to be dead. The King of England, also, gets intelligence how his daughter has been treated, and thereupon makes war on her husband. When they are on the eve of a decisive battle, Dorothea makes her appearance in the camp, to the astonishment of all parties: she pleads tenderly for her repentant husband; at her tears and entreaties, the strife is composed, and a general reconciliation takes place; Ateukin and his abettors being delivered over to their deserts.

On the whole, the play has considerable discrimination of character, though, to be sure, the characters are drawn from the surface inwards, not from the heart outwards. The parts of Ida and the Queen are by no means without delicacy and pathos, showing that the author was not far from some right ideas what genuine womanhood is. Ateukin's part, too, is very well conceived and sustained, though the qualities of a parasite are made rather too naked and bald, as would naturally result from the writer's desire of effect being too strong for his love of nature and truth. The comic portions, also, are much beyond any thing we have hitherto met with in that line, since Ralph Roister Doister and Misogonus. The versification, though of course wanting in variety, is tolerably free from smoke and flam, and the style, in many parts, may be pronounced rather tight and sinewy.

The next piece of Greene's that we are to notice is The

Honourable History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay, first printed in 1594, but acted as early as 1591. The hero is Edward, Prince of Wales, afterwards King Edward I.; the heroine, Margaret, a keeper's daughter, distinguished as "the fair maid of Fressingfield." The Prince is out in disguise on a merry hunting excursion, with Lacy and Warren, Earls of Lincoln and Sussex, Ermsby, a gentleman, and Ralph Simnel, the King's Fool: he meets with Margaret, who has no suspicion who he is, and his fancy is at once smitten with her, so that he grows moping and malcontent. From this state of mind results the following bit of dialogue, which is a very favourable specimen of Greene's knack at poetry:

Edward. Tell me, Ned Lacy, didst thou mark the maid
How lively in her country weeds she look'd?
A bonnier wench all Suffolk cannot yield:—
All Suffolk! nay, all England holds none such.
I tell thee, Lacy, that her sparkling eyes
Do lighten forth sweet love's alluring fire;
And in her tresses she doth fold the looks
Of such as gaze upon her golden hair:
Her bashful white, mix'd with the morning's red,
Luna doth boast upon her lovely cheeks;
Her front is beauty's table, where she paints
The glories of her gorgeous excellence;
Her teeth are shelves of precious margarites,
Richly enclos'd with ruddy coral cliffs.
Tush, Lacy! she is beauty's overmatch,
If thou survey'st her curious imagery.

Lacy. I grant, my lord, the damsel is as fair
As simple Suffolk's homely towns can yield;
But in the court be quainter dames than she,
Whose faces are enrich'd with honour's tint,
Whose beauties stand upon the stage of fame,
And vaunt their trophies in the courts of love.

Edward. Ah, Ned! but hadst thou watch'd her as myself,
And seen the secret beauties of the maid,
Their courtly coyness were but foolery.

Ermsby. Why, how watch'd you her, my lord?

Edward. Whenas she swept like Venus through the house,
And in her shape fast folded up my thoughts;
Into the milk-house went I with the maid,
And there amongst the cream-bowls she did shine,
As Pallas, 'mongst her princely housewifery:

She turn d her smock over her lily arms,
And div'd them into milk, to run her cheese;
But whiter than the milk her crystal skin,
Checked with lines of azure, made her blush,
That art or nature durst bring for compare.
If thou hadst seen, as I did note it well,
How beauty play'd the housewife, how this girl
Like Lucrece laid her fingers to the work,
Thou would'st with Tarquin hazard Rome and all,
To win the lovely maid of Fressingfield."

At Ralph's suggestion, the Prince sets out on a visit to Friar Bacon at Oxford, to learn from the conjurer how his affair is going to issue, and sends Lacy in the disguise of a farmer's son, to court Margaret for him, instructing him for the task as follows:

"Lacy, thou know'st next Friday is St. James',
And then the country flocks to Harleston fair:
Then will the keeper's daughter frolic there,
And overshine the troop of all the maids,
That come to see, and to be seen that day.
Haunt thee, disguis'd, among the country swains;
Feign thou'rt a farmer's son, not far from thence;
Espy her loves, and whom she liketh best;
Cote him, and court her to control the clown;
Say that the courtier 'tired all in green,
That help'd her handsomely to run her cheese,
And fill'd her father's lodge with venison,
Commends him, and sends fairings for herself.
Buy something worthy of her parentage,
Not worth her beauty; for, Lacy, then the fair
Affords no jewel fitting for the maid:
And, when thou talk'st of me, note, if she blush,
O, then she loves! but if her cheeks wax pale,
Disdain it is. Lacy, send how she fares,
And spare no time nor cost to win her loves."

Lacy believes that the Prince's wooing is not to wed the girl, but to entrap and beguile her; besides, his own heart is already interested; so he goes to courting her in good earnest for himself. Meanwhile, the Prince changes dress and place with Ralph, and arrives with his company, all disguised, at Friar Bacon's: the mighty conjurer knows at once

who they all are, tells the Prince what he has been doing, and what he proposes to do; informs him, also, what Lacy is going about; and hands him a magic glass, through which he sees and hears Lacy wooing the maid, witnesses their mutual vowing, while Friar Bungay is waiting upon them, ready to tie them up in wedlock. At the Prince's request, Bacon strikes Bungay dumb, just as he is going to say the service; and presently one of Bacon's devils comes among the wedding party, and carries off the weaker conjurer to Oxford; which causes the marriage to be deferred awhile. Soon after, the Prince comes upon Lacy, poniard in hand, to call him to account for his treachery, and meaning to kill him on the spot, right in the presence of Margaret. She intercedes for her lover, and lays all the blame of his action on the efforts she had made to bewitch him with her looks: the Prince then lays tough siege to her in person, but she vows she will rather die with Lacy, than divorce her heart from his, and finally reminds him of his own princely fame and honour; whereupon he frankly resigns her to his rival's hand.

Not long after, two country gentlemen, named Lambert and Serlsby, appear as suitors to Margaret; but she asks time to consider which of them she prefers; and they forthwith engage in a duel, and kill each other. Each of them has a son at Oxford: the sons, being linked in close friendship, go together to Bacon's cell, and request the use of his glass, to see how their fathers fare; their looking happens just in time to see the fatal duel; whereupon the sons forthwith pitch into each other, and both are killed: which puts the conjurer in such distress, that he smashes up the magic glass.

While these things are going on, Lacy sends a messenger to Margaret, with a large purse of gold, and a letter, that his love for her has all died out, his heart turned to another lady, and there is an end of their engagement: she rejects his money with the utmost disdain and sorrow, and deter-

mines to seclude herself for life in a nunnery; but it turns out that Lacy's purpose was merely to prove her strength of affection; so, in the end, they are married.

Among other entertainments of the scene, we have a trial of national skill betwixt Bacon and Bungay on one side, and Vandermast, a noted conjurer from Germany, on the other. The trial takes place in the presence of Henry III., the Emperor of Germany, the King of Castile, and his daughter Elinor, the latter three being on a visit to the English King. First, Bungay tries his art, and is thoroughly baffled by the German; then Bacon takes him in hand, and outconjures him all to nothing, calling in one of his Spirits, who transports him straight to his study in Hapsburg. Bacon has a servant named Miles, who, for his ignorant blundering in a very weighty matter, is at last carried off to hell by one of his master's devils. The last scene is concerned with the marriage of Prince Edward and Elinor of Castile, and is closed by Bacon with a grand prophecy touching Elizabeth.

Here, again, we have some well-discriminated and well-sustained characterisation, especially in the Prince, Lacy, Margaret, and Ralph. The maid of Fressingfield is Greene's masterpiece in female character; she exhibits much strength, spirit, and sweetness of composition; in fact, she is not equalled by any dramatic woman of the English stage till we come to Shakespeare, whom no one else has ever approached in that line. — Taken all together, the style of the piece is not quite equal to that of James IV.

"A pleasant-conceited comedy of George a Greene, the Pinner of Wakefield," printed in 1599, is ascribed to Greene, mainly on the testimony of Juby, a contemporary actor; a note to that effect being found in one of the old copies, and pronounced by Mr. Collier to be in the hand-writing of the time. Another manuscript note in the same copy states that it was written by a minister, and refers to Shakespeare as a witness of the fact. Still it is difficult to believe that

Greene was the author of it: certainly the style and versification are much better than in any other of his plays; nor does it show any thing of that incontinence of learning which Greene seems to have been unable to restrain.

The story of the piece is quite entertaining in itself, and is told with a good deal of vivacity and spirit. Among the characters, are King Edward of England, King James of Scotland, the Earl of Kendall, and other lords, and Robin Hood. George a Greene is the hero; who, what with his wit, and what with his strength, gets the better of all the other persons in turn. Withal, he is full of high and solid manhood, and his character is drawn with more vigour and life than any we have hitherto noticed. Our space cannot afford any lengthened analysis: one passage, however, must not be passed over. The piece opens with the Earl of Kendall and his adherents in rebellion against the state. The Earl sends Sir Nicholas Mannering to Wakefield, to demand provision for his camp. Sir Nicholas enters the town, and shows his commission: the magistrates are in a perplexity what to do, till the hero enters amongst them, outfaces the messenger, tears up his commission, makes him eat the seals, and sends him back with an answer of defiance. The Earl afterwards gives his adherents the following account of the matter:

> "Why, the justices stand on their terms.
> Nick, as you know, is haughty in his words:
> He laid the law unto the justices
> With threatening braves, that one look'd on another,
> Ready to stoop; but that a churl came in,
> One George a Greene, the Pinner of the town,
> And, with his dagger drawn, laid hands on Nick,
> And by no beggars swore that we were traitors,
> Rent our commission, and upon a brave
> Made Nick to eat the seals, or brook the stab:
> Poor Mannering, afraid, came posting hither straight."

Here we have a taste of blank-verse — and there is much more of the same — which is far unlike Greene's any where

else. The incident, however, is very curious in that Greene himself once performed a similar feat: so at least Nash tells us in his Strange News, where he has the following addressed to Gabriel Harvey, Greene's bitter enemy: "Had he lived, Gabriel, and thou libelled against him, as thou hast done, he would have driven thee to eat thy own book buttered, as I saw him make an apparitor once in a tavern eat his citation, wax and all, very handsomely served 'twixt two dishes." This, no doubt, would strongly infer Greene's authorship of the play, but that in the old prose history of George a Greene, on which the play is founded, the valiant Pinner puts Mannering through the same operation.

Greene was concerned, along with Thomas Lodge, in writing another extant play, entitled A Looking-Glass for London and England. The piece is little better than a piece of stage trash, being a mixture of comedy, tragedy, and Miracle-play. It sets forth the crimes and vices of Nineveh, from the king downwards, the landing of Jonah from the whale's belly, his preaching against the city, and the repentance of the people in sackcloth and ashes; an Angel, a Devil, and the Prophet Hosea taking part in the action: all which was of course meant as a warning to England in general, and London in particular. The verse parts are in Greene's puffiest style, and the prose parts in his filthiest.

Greene probably wrote divers other plays, but none others have survived, that are known to have been his. Nevertheless, we make very little doubt that he was the author of the old play on which Shakespeare founded The Taming of the Shrew: but, as the question is discussed enough in our Introduction to that play, it need not be dwelt upon here.

We now come to by far the greatest of Shakespeare's predecessors. Christopher Marlowe, the son of a shoemaker, was born at Canterbury, and baptized in the church of St. George the Martyr, on the 26th of February, 1564, just two months before the baptism of Shakespeare. His earlier

education was in the King's School at Canterbury, founded by Henry VIII.: he was entered a Pensioner of Benet College, Cambridge, in March, 1581, took his first degree in 1583, and became Master of Arts in 1587. He was educated, no doubt, with a view to one of the learned professions: Mr. Dyce thinks he was "most probably intended for the Church." It is not unlikely that he may have adopted the atheist's faith before leaving the University, and it is pretty certain that he led the rest of his life according to that beginning; as in his later years he was specially notorious for his blasphemous opinions and profligate behaviour. Perhaps it was an early leaning to atheism that broke up his purpose of taking holy orders; at all events, he was soon embarked among the worst literary adventurers of London, living by his wits, and rioting on the quick profits of his pen. We have already seen that his Tamburlaine was written, certainly before 1588, probably before 1587; for a young man of twenty-four, a most astonishing production! There is little doubt that he strutted awhile on the stage; for in a ballad written upon him not long after his death, and entitled The Atheist's Tragedy, we are told, —

> "He had also a player been upon the Curtain-stage,
> But brake his leg in one lewd scene, when in his early age."

Marlowe's career was of brief duration, but very fruitful in more senses than one. He was slain by one Francis Archer in a brawl, on the 1st of June, 1593. Meres, in his *Palladis Tamia*, 1598, makes the following note of the event: "Christopher Marlowe was stabbed to death by a bawdy serving-man, a rival of his in his lewd love." In Beard's Theatre of God's Judgments, 1597, the process of his death is stated thus: "So it fell out, that, as he purposed to stab one whom he owed a grudge unto, with his dagger, the other party, perceiving, so avoided the stroke, that, withal catching hold of his wrist, he stabbed his own dagger into his own head, in such sort that, notwithstanding all the

means of surgery that could be wrought, he shortly after died thereof." Some further particulars respecting him may be found in Chapter iii. of the Poet's Life.

Marlowe's first dramatic labours came from the press in 1590, the title-page reading thus: "Tamburlaine the Great: Who, from a Scythian shepherd, by his rare and wonderful conquests became a most puissant and mighty Monarch; and, for his tyranny, and terror in war, was termed The Scourge of God. Divided into two tragical Discourses, as they were sundry times showed upon stages in the City of London, by the Right Honourable the Lord Admiral his servants." In these two pieces, what Ben Jonson describes as "Marlowe's mighty line" is out in all its mightiness. The lines, to be sure, have a vast amount of strut and swell in them, as if they would fain knock the planets out of their stations; but then they have, also, a great deal of real energy and vigour. Not the least of his merits consists, as we have already seen, in the delivering of the public stage from the shackles of rhyme, and endowing the national dramatic poetry with at least the beginnings of genuine freedom, and inexhaustible variety of structure and movement. This is audaciously announced in his Prologue to the play in hand, as follows:

> "From jigging veins of rhyming mother-wits,
> And such conceits as clownage keeps in pay,
> We'll lead you to the stately tent of war,
> Where you shall hear the Scythian Tamburlaine
> Threatening the world with high astounding terms,
> And scourging kingdoms with his conquering sword."

Perhaps nothing less than his dare-devil audacity was needed, to set at defiance the general prescription of the time in this particular; a work less likely to be achieved alone by the far greater mind of Shakespeare, since, from his very greatness, especially in the moral elements, he would needs be more eager and apt to learn, and therefore more reverent of the past, and more docile to the collective experience of his age and nation.

Be this as it may, the innovation appears to have been hugely successful from the first: Tamburlaine had a sudden, a great, and long-continued popularity. And its success was partly owing, no doubt, to its very faults, forasmuch as the public ear, long used to rhyme, required some compensation in the way of grandiloquent stuffing, which was here supplied in abundance. It was, in short, just the thing to break the thick ice of custom for a new and better dramatic style.

The scene of these two dramas — and they are two only because too long to be one — takes in the whole period of time from the hero's first conquest till his death; so that the action of course ranges, *ad libitum*, over divers kingdoms and empires. Except the hero, there is little really deserving the name of characterisation; this being a point of art which Marlowe had not yet begun to reach, and which he never attained but in a moderate degree, taking Shakespeare as the standard. But the hero is drawn with grand and striking proportions; and perhaps seems the larger, that the bones of his individuality are exaggerated into undue prominence; the author lacking that balance and reciprocity of powers which is required, to maintain the roundness and symmetry met with in all nature's greater productions of life. The following is a description of him, given by one of the other characters:

"Of stature tall, and straightly fashioned,
Like his desire, lift upwards and divine;
So large of limbs, his joints so strongly knit,
Such breadth of shoulders, as might mainly bear
Old Atlas' burden: 'twixt his manly pitch,
A pearl more worth than all the world is plac'd,
Wherein, by curious sovereignty of art,
Are fix'd his piercing instruments of sight;
Whose fiery circles bear encompassed
A heaven of heavenly bodies in their spheres,
That guides his steps and actions to the throne
Where honour sits invested royally:
Pale of complexion, wrought in him with passion,
Thirsting with sovereignty and love of arms;
His lofty brows in folds do figure death,

And in their smoothness amity and life;
About them hangs a knot of amber hair
Wrapped in curls, as fierce Achilles' was,
On which the breath of heaven delights to play,
Making it dance with wanton majesty:
His arms and fingers long and sinewy,
Betokening valour and excess of strength;—
In every part proportion'd like the man
Should make the world subdued to Tamburlaine."

In respect of poetry at least, this is one of the best passages, perhaps the best, in the whole performance; which, however, will readily be allowed to leave room for much excellence in others. We must add another spoken by the hero himself to Cosroe, one of his many captive kings:

"The thirst of reign and sweetness of a crown,
That caus'd the eldest son of heavenly Ops
To thrust his doting father from his chair,
And place himself in the empyreal heaven,
Mov'd me to manage arms against thy state.
What better precedent than mighty Jove?
Nature, that fram'd us of four elements
Warring within our breasts for regiment,
Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds:
Our souls, whose faculties can comprehend
The wondrous architecture of the world,
And measure every wandering planet's course,
Still climbing after knowledge infinite,
And always moving as the restless spheres,
Will us to wear ourselves, and never rest,
Until we reap the ripest fruit of all,
That perfect bliss and sole felicity,
The sweet fruition of an earthly crown."

And Tamburlaine is represented in action as a most magnanimous prodigy; amidst his haughtiest strides of conquest, we have traits of great gentleness interwoven with his iron sternness: everywhere, indeed, he appears lifted high with heroic passions and impulses; if he regards not others, he is equally ready to sacrifice himself, his ease, pleasure, and even life, in his prodigious lust of glory: in which respect his temper is shown by the following from one of his speeches to his three sons:

But now, my boys, leave off, and list to me,
That mean to teach you rudiments of war.
I'll have you learn to sleep upon the ground,
March in your armour thorough watery fens,
Sustain the scorching heat and freezing cold,
Hunger and thirst, right adjuncts of the war;
And, after this, to scale a castle-wall,
Besiege a fort, to undermine a town,
And make whole cities caper in the air."

One other passage we must notice, partly for contributing towards Pistol's vocabulary of fustian, in 2 Henry IV., Act ii. sc. 4. The hero is represented travelling in a chariot drawn by captive kings, and whipping them with his tongue, thus:

"Holla, ye pamper'd jades of Asia!
What! can ye draw but twenty miles a day,
And have so proud a chariot at your heels,
And such a coachman as great Tamburlaine?
The horse that guide the golden eye of heaven,
And blow the morning from their nostrils,
Making their fiery gait above the clouds,
Are not so honour'd in their governor,
As you, ye slaves, in mighty Tamburlaine.
The headstrong jades of Thrace Alcides tam'd,
That King Ægeus fed with human flesh,
And made so wanton that they knew their strengths,
Were not subdued with valour more divine
Than you by this unconquer'd arm of mine.
To make you fierce, and fit my appetite,
You shall be fed with flesh as raw as blood,
And drink in pails the strongest muscadel:
If you can live with it, then live, and draw
My chariot swifter than the racking clouds;
If not, then die like beasts, and fit for nought
But perches for the black and fatal ravens."

It is to be noted, though, that the incident was not original with Marlowe: one of the dumb-shows in Gascoigne's Jocasta, spoken of in the preceding Chapter, has the following: "There came in upon the stage a King with an imperial crown upon his head, a sceptre in his right hand, sitting in a chariot very richly furnished, drawn in by four kings in their doublets and hose, with crowns also upon their heads;

representing unto us Ambition by the history of Sesostris king of Egypt, who did in like manner cause those kings whom he had overcome to draw in his chariot like beasts and oxen."

As to the rest, the drama in hand consists rather of a long series of speeches than any genuine dialogue. The persons all use the style of premeditating speech-makers: of course therefore their speeches all run in much the same vein; and the hero talks just like the others, only a good deal more so; as if the author knew not how to discriminate characters but by different degrees of the same thing. Moreover, the several parts of the work are not moulded up into any thing like artistic wholeness; the materials rather seem tumbled in for stage effect, instead of being selected and assorted on any principle of coherence or congruity. And the piece affects us throughout as a high-pitched monotone of superlatives in thought and diction: everywhere we have nearly the same rampant, boisterous extravagance of tragical storm and stress; with no changes of rise and fall, no perspective of objects, that so we may take distinct impressions. We will dismiss the subject with Mr. Dyce's judicious remarks: "With very little discrimination of character, with much extravagance of incident, with no pathos where pathos was to be expected, and with a profusion of inflated language, Tamburlaine is nevertheless a very impressive drama, and undoubtedly superior to all the English tragedies which preceded it; — superior to them in the effectiveness with which the events are brought out, in the poetic feeling which animates the whole, and in the nerve and variety of the versification."

The Jew of Malta shows very considerable advance towards a chaste and sober diction, but not much either in development of character, or in composition of the parts. Barabas, the Jew, is a horrible monster of wickedness and cunning, yet not without some strong lines of individuality. The author evidently sought to compass the effect of tragedy

by mere accumulation of murders and hellish deeds; which shows that he had no steady idea wherein lies the true secret of tragic terror: he here works on the principle of reaching it by exaggerated impressions of the senses, whereas its proper method stands in the joint working of the moral and imaginative powers; which are rather stifled than kindled by causing the senses to "sup full of horrors." The versification is far more varied, compact, and light-flashing, than in Tamburlaine: the piece abounds in quick and caustic wit; in some parts, there is a good share of genuine dialogue as distinguished from speech-making; now and then the movement becomes almost intensely dramatic, the speakers striking fire out of each other by their sharp collisions of thought, so that their words relish of the individuality of both the person speaking and the person spoken to. Still, as a whole, the piece shows but little that can properly be called dramatic power, as distinguished from the general powers of rhetoric and wit.

Mr. Dyce, after remarking that the interest of the play depends entirely on the character of Barabas, and that this part is a good deal overcharged, adds the following: "But I suspect that, in this instance at least, Marlowe violated the truth of nature, not so much from his love of exaggeration, as in consequence of having borrowed all the atrocities of the play from some now-unknown novel, whose author was willing to flatter the prejudices of his readers by attributing almost impossible wickedness to a son of Israel. — That Shakespeare was well acquainted with this tragedy, cannot be doubted; but that he caught from it more than a few trifling hints for The Merchant of Venice, will be allowed by no one who has carefully compared the character of Barabas with that of Shylock."

Remains but to add that the drama has an allusion which ascertains it to have been written after 1588; that it was not printed till 1633; and that Thomas Heywood, who then edited it, informs us that the hero's part was originally sustained by Edward Alleyn

The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus, written, most likely, as early as 1588, though not printed till 1604, exhib its Marlowe in a higher vein of workmanship. Collier speaks of it as follows: "Here the poet, wishing to astonish, and to delight by astonishing, has called in the aid of magic and supernatural agency, and has wrought from his materials a drama full of power, novelty, interest, and variety. All the serious scenes of Faustus eminently excite both pity and terror." This, it seems to us, is going it rather too strong still it must be acknowledged that the author here wields the right elements and processes of tragic effect with no ordinary subtlety and power. The hero is a mighty necromancer, who has studied himself into a direct communion with preternatural beings, and beside whom Friar Bacon sinks into a tame forger of bugbears. A Good Angel and a Bad Angel figure in the piece, each trying to win Faustus to his several way: Lucifer is ambitious of possessing the hero's "glorious soul," and the hero craves Lucifer's aid, that he may work wonders in the earth. Mephistophilis comes at his summons, and the following scene passes betwix them:

"*Meph.* Now, Faustus, what would'st thou have me do?
Faust. I charge thee, wait upon me whilst I live,
To do whatever Faustus shall command;
Be it to make the moon drop from her sphere
Or the ocean to overwhelm the world.
Meph. I am a servant to great Lucifer,
And may not follow thee without his leave:
No more than he commands must we perform.
Faust. Did not he charge thee to appear to me?
Meph. No; I came hither of mine own accord.
Faust. Did not my conjuring speeches raise thee? speak
Meph. That was the cause, but yet *per accidens;*
For, when we hear one rack the name of God,
Abjure the Scriptures and his Saviour Christ,
We fly, in hope to get his glorious soul;
Nor will we come, unless he use such means,
Whereby he is in danger to be damn'd.
Faust. So Faustus hath already done; and holds this principle:
There is no chief but only Beelzebub;

To whom Faustus doth dedicate himself.
This word damnation terrifies not him,
For he confounds hell in Elysium:
His ghost be with the old philosophers!
But, leaving these vain trifles of men's souls,
Tell me, what is that Lucifer thy lord?

Meph. Arch-regent and commander of all spirits.

Faust. Was not that Lucifer an angel once?

Meph. Yes, Faustus, and most dearly lov'd of God.

Faust. How comes it, then, that he is prince of devils?

Meph. O, by aspiring pride and insolence!
For which God threw him from the face of heaven.

Faust. And what are you that live with Lucifer?

Meph. Unhappy spirits that fell with Lucifer,
And are forever damn'd with Lucifer.

Faust. Where are you damn'd?

Meph. In hell.

Faust. How comes it, then, that thou art out of hell?

Meph. Why, this is hell, nor am I out of it:
Think'st thou that I, who saw the face of God,
And tasted the eternal joys of heaven,
Am not tormented with ten thousand hells,
In being depriv'd of everlasting bliss?
O, Faustus! leave these frivolous demands,
Which strike a terror to my fainting soul.

Faust. What! is great Mephistophilis so passionate
For being deprived of the joys of heaven?
Learn thou of Faustus manly fortitude,
And scorn those joys thou never shalt possess.
Go bear these tidings to great Lucifer:
Seeing Faustus hath incurr'd eternal death,
Say, he surrenders up to him his soul,
So he will spare him four-and-twenty years,
Letting him live in all voluptuousness;
Having thee ever to attend on me,
To give me whatsoever I shall ask,
To tell me whatsoever I demand,
To slay mine enemies, and aid my friends,
And always be obedient to my will.
Go, and return to mighty Lucifer,
And meet me in my study at midnight,
And then resolve me of thy master's mind."

In this imperturbable, hell-confronting coolness of Faustus, and his serene calmness in asking questions which the fiend shudders to consider, we have a strain of sublimity hardly surpassed by Milton's Satan. At the return of

Mephistophilis, he makes a compact with Lucifer, draws blood from his own arm, and with it writes out a deed of gift, assuring his soul and body to the fiend at the end of twenty-four years. Thenceforth he spends his time in exercising the mighty spells and incantations thus purchased; he has the power of making himself invisible, and entering whatsoever houses he lists; he passes from kingdom to kingdom with the speed of thought; wields the elements at will, and has the energies of nature at his command; summons the Grecian Helen to his side for a paramour; and holds the world in wonder at his acts. Meanwhile, the knowledge which hell has given him of heaven seems to haunt his mind; he cannot shake off the thought of the awful compact of death which hangs over him; repentance carries on a desperate struggle in him with the necromantic fascination, and at one time fairly outwrestles it; but he soon recovers his purpose, and renews his pledge to Lucifer. In one of these terrible struggles, he soliloquises thus:

> "My heart's so harden'd, I cannot repent:
> Scarce can I name salvation, faith, or heaven,
> But fearful echoes thunder in mine ears,
> 'Faustus, thou art damn'd!' then swords and knives,
> Poison, guns, halters, and envenom'd steel
> Are laid before me to despatch myself;
> And long ere this I should have slain myself,
> Had not sweet pleasure conquer'd deep despair.
> Have not I made blind Homer sing to me
> Of Alexander's love and Œnon's death?
> And hath not he that built the walls of Thebes
> With ravishing sound of his melodious harp,
> Made music with my Mephistophilis?
> Why should I die, then, or basely despair?
> I am resolv'd; Faustus shall ne'er repent."

Awful is the still solemnity of the scene where, as his lease of life is about to expire, he communes with himself, and counts the minutes of his last hour:

> "Stand still, you ever-moving spheres of heaven,
> That time may cease, and midnight never come

Fair Nature's eye, rise, rise again, and make
Perpetual day; or let this hour be but
A year, a month, a week, a natural day,
That Faustus may repent, and save his soul! —
The stars move still, time runs, the clock will strike,
The devil will come, and Faustus must be damn'd.
O, I'll leap up to God! — Who pulls me down? —
See, where Christ's blood streams in the firmament!
One drop would save my soul, half a drop: ah, my Christ: —
Rend not my heart for naming of my Christ!
Yet will I call on Him: O, spare me, Lucifer! —
Where is it now? 'tis gone: and see, where God
Stretcheth out His arm, and bends His ireful brows! —
Mountains and hills, come, come, and fall on me,
And hide me from the heavy wrath of God!"

In all these passages, but especially the last two, we see a far higher and richer style of versification, than in the quotations from Tamburlaine. The author's diction has grown more pliant and facile to his thought; consequently, it is highly varied in pause, inflection, and movement; showing that in his hand the noble instrument of dramatic blank-verse was fast growing into tune, for a hand far mightier than his to discourse its harmonies upon. We must add, that considerable portions both of this play and the preceding are meant to be comical. But the result only proves that Marlowe was incapable of comedy: no sooner does he attempt the comic vein, than his whole style collapses into mere buffoonery and balderdash. In fact, though plentifully gifted with wit, there was not a particle of real humour in him; none of that subtle and perfusive essence out of which the true comic is spun; for these choice powers can scarce exist but in the society of certain moral elements that seem to have been left out of his composition.

The Troublesome Reign and Lamentable Death of Edward the Second, printed in 1598, though inferior to Faustus in tragic terror, as a whole is certainly much the best, as it was probably the last-written, of Marlowe's dramas. Here, for the first time, we meet with a genuine specimen of the English Historical Drama. The scene covers a period of

twenty years; the incidents pass with great rapidity, and, though sometimes crushed into indistinctness, are for the most part well used both for historic truth and dramatic effect; the dialogue, generally, is nervous, animated, and clear; and the versification, throughout, moves with a freedom and variety, such as may almost stand a comparison with Shakespeare. In the article of character, too, Edward the Second has very considerable merit: the King's insane dotage of his favourites, the upstart vanity and insolence of Gaveston, the artful practice and doubtful virtue of Queen Isabella, the factious turbulence of the nobles, irascible, arrogant, regardless of others' liberty, jealous of their own, sudden of quarrel, eager in revenge, are all depicted with a goodly mixture of energy and temperance. It is not unlikely that by this time the former relation between Marlowe and Shakespeare of teacher and pupil had become reversed; for in our Life of the Poet we have seen good evidence, that before the death of Marlowe Shakespeare had far surpassed all of that age who had ever been competent to teach him in any point of dramatic workmanship.

Our chief concern with Marlowe is as the inaugurator of blank-verse on the national stage, and thereby a great improver of dramatic poetry in all that relates to diction and metrical style. It is for this reason that we have quoted so largely from his preceding dramas; and the same reason calls for some specimens from the piece now in hand. The following, as it is nearly good enough in this respect, is also among the best: it is part of a scene betwixt Edward, Mortimer, and Lancaster:

"*Morti.* *Nay, now you are here alone*, I'll speak my mind
Lancas. And so will I; and then, my lord, farewell.
Morti. The idle triumphs, masques, lascivious shows,
And prodigal gifts bestow'd on Gaveston,
Have drawn *thy treasury dry*, and made thee weak;
The murmuring commons, overstretched, break.
Lancas. Look for rebellion, look to be depos'd:
Thy garrisons are beaten out of France,
And, lame and poor, lie groaning at the gates:

The wild O'Neil, with swarms of Irish kerns,
Lives uncontroll'd within the English pale;
Unto the walls of York the Scots make road,
And, unresisted, drive away rich spoils.

Morti. The haughty Dane commands the narrow seas,
While in the harbour ride thy ships unrigg'd.

Lancas. What foreign prince sends thee ambassadors?

Morti. Who loves thee, but a sort of flatterers?

Lancas. Thy gentle queen, sole sister to Valois,
Complains that thou hast left her all forlorn.

Morti. Thy court is naked, being bereft of those
That make a king seem glorious to the world,
I mean the peers, whom thou should'st dearly love,
Libels are cast against thee in the street;
Ballads and rhymes made of thy overthrow.

Lancas. The northern borderers, seeing their houses burnt,
Their wives and children slain, run up and down,
Cursing the name of thee and Gaveston.

Morti. When wert thou in the field with banner spread?
But once; and then thy soldiers *march'd like players,*
With garish robes, not armour; and thyself,
Bedaub'd with gold, rode laughing at the rest,
Nodding and shaking of thy spangled crest,
Where women's favours hung like labels down.'

Still better is the following from a later scene, where Arundel relates to Edward and Spenser the seizure and death of Gaveston:

"*Edw. What! Lord* Arundel, dost thou come alone?

Arun. Yea, my good lord, for Gaveston is dead.

Edw. Ah, traitors! have they put my friend to death?
Tell me, Arundel, died he ere thou cam'st,
Or didst thou see my friend to take his death?

Arun. Neither, my lord; for, as he was surpris'd,
Begirt with weapons and with *enemies round,*
I did your Highness' message to them all,
Demanding him of them, *entreating rather,*
And said, upon the honour of my name,
That I would undertake to carry him
Unto your Highness, and to bring him back.

Edw. And, tell me, *would the rebels deny me that?*

Spen. Proud recreants!

Edw. Yea, Spenser, traitors all!

Arun. I found them at the first *inexorable:*
The Earl of Warwick would not *bide the hearing.*
Mortimer hardly; Pembroke *and Lancaster*

Spake least; and when they flatly had denied,
Refusing to receive me pledge for him,
The Earl of Pembroke mildly thus bespake:
'My lords, because our sovereign sends for him,
And promiseth he shall be safe return'd,
I will this undertake, to have him hence,
And see him re-deliver'd to your hands.'

Edw. *Well, and* how fortunes it that he *came not?*

Spen. *Some treason* or some villainy was cause.

Arun. The Earl of Warwick seiz'd him on his way;
For, being deliver'd unto Pembroke's men,
Their lord rode home, thinking his *prisoner safe*
But, ere he came, Warwick in ambush lay,
And bare him to his death; and in a trench
Strake off his head, and march'd unto the camp.

Spen. A bloody part, *flatly 'gainst law* of arms!

Edw. O! shall I speak, or shall I sigh, and die?

Spen. My lord, refer your vengeance to the sword
Upon these barons; hearten up your men;
Let them not unreveng'd *murder* your friends;
Advance your standard, Edward, in the field,
And march to fire them from their starting-holes

Edw. By earth, the common mother of us all,
By heaven, and all the moving orbs thereof,
By this right hand, and by my father's sword,
And all the honours 'longing to my crown,
I will have heads and lives for him as *many*
As I have manors, castles, towns, and towers!—
Treacherous Warwick! *traitorous* Mortimer!
If I be England's king, in lakes of gore
Your headless trunks, your bodies will I trail,
That you may drink your fill, and quaff in blood,
And stain my royal standard with the same;
That so my bloody colours may suggest
Remembrance of revenge immortally
On your accursed *traitorous* progeny,
You villains that have slain my Gaveston!—
And in this place of honour and of trust,
Spenser, sweet Spenser, I adopt thee here;
And merely of our love we do *create thee*
Earl of Glocester, and Lord Chamberlain.
Despite of times, despite of enemies.

Spen. My lord, here is *a messenger from the barons,*
Desires access unto your Majesty.

Edw. Admit him near.

Herald. *Long live King Edward,* England's lawful lord

Edw. So wish not they, I wis, that sent thee *hither:*
Thou com'st from *Mortimer* and his 'complices."

Here we have the rhymeless ten-syllable iambic verse as the basis; but this is continually diversified, so as to relieve the ear and keep it awake, by occasional spondees and anapests, and the frequent use of trochees in all parts of the verse, but especially at the beginning and end, and by a skilful shifting of the pause to any point of the line. It thus combines the natural ease and variety of prose with the general effect of metrical harmony, so that the hearing never tires nor falls asleep. As to the general *poetic* style of the performance, the kindling energy of thought and language, that often beats and flashes along the sentences, there is much both in this and Faustus to justify the fine enthusiasm of Michael Drayton:

> "Next, Marlowe, bathed in the Thespian springs,
> Had in him those brave translunary things
> That the first poets had: his raptures were
> All air and fire, which made his verses clear;
> For that fine madness still he did retain,
> Which rightly should possess a poet's brain."

Before leaving the subject, we must notice a remark by Charles Lamb. "The reluctant pangs," says he, "of abdicating royalty in Edward furnished hints which Shakespeare has scarce improved in his Richard the Second; and the death-scene of Marlowe's king moves pity and terror beyond any scene, ancient or modern, with which I am acquainted." Both the scenes in question have indeed great merit, still this praise seems to us far beyond the mark. In the first place, it is highly probable, if not more, that Shakespeare's play was written before Marlowe's. Then, there is, unquestionably, more of genuine, pity-moving pathos in a single speech of Richard the Second, Act v. sc. 2, beginning, — "As in a theatre the eyes of men," — than in all Marlowe's writings put together. And as to the moving of terror, there is, to our mind, nothing in Edward the Second that comes up to Faustus; and there are at least a dozen scenes in Macbeth, either of which has far more of the terrific, than

the whole body of Faustus. And, in the death-scene of Edward, it can hardly be denied that the senses are somewhat overcrammed with images of physical suffering, so as to give the effect rather of the horrible than the terrible.

Others, again, have advanced the notion that Marlowe, if he had lived, would have made some good approach to Shakespeare in tragic power. Doubtless, a few more years would have lifted him to very noble things, if, that is, his powers could have been kept from the eatings and cripplings of debauchery; still, any approach to that great divinity of the drama was out of the question for him. For, judging from his life and works, the moral part of genius was, constitutionally, wanting in him; and, without this, the intellectual part can never be truly itself: it must needs be comparatively weak in those points of our being which it touches, because it does not touch them all; for the whole must be moved at once, else there can be no great moving of any part. No, no! there was not, there could not have been in Marlowe, great as he was, the half of Shakespeare, for tragedy, nor any thing else. To go no further, he was, as we have seen, destitute of humour; the powers of comedy had, evidently, no place in him; and these powers, unquestionably, are indispensable to the production of high tragedy; a position affirmed as long ago as the days of Plato; sound in the reason of the thing, and, above all, made good in the example of Shakespeare; who *was* Shakespeare, mainly because he had *all* the powers of the human mind in harmonious order and action, and *used* them all, explicitly or implicitly, in every thing he wrote.

We shall omit to do more than barely mention The Massacre at Paris, and The Tragedy of Dido, Queen of Carthage, because they add nothing either to the extent or the variety of Marlowe's powers. The latter was written by him in conjunction with Thomas Nash. We leave him, with the following just and elegant passage from Mr. Dyce's Account of Peele and his Writings: "When we regard Peele

as a dramatist, it is difficult to separate him from Marlowe and Greene, with whom he divided the admiration of his contemporaries. These three gifted men, though they often present to us pictures that in design and colouring outrage the truth of nature, are the earliest of our tragic writers who exhibit any just delineation of the workings of passion: their language, though now swelling into bombast, and now sinking into meanness, is generally rich with poetry; while their versification, though somewhat monotonous, is almost always flowing and harmonious. They as much excel their immediate predecessors, as they are themselves excelled by Shakespeare, — by 'him, O, wondrous him!' — whose genius was beginning to blaze upon the world about the close of their career."

Shakespeare had several other senior contemporaries, of whom it seems necessary to say a few words, though it is not likely that they contributed much, if any thing, in the way of preparation for him. First of these, in the order of time, is John Lyly, born in 1554, and M. A. in 1576. He had considerable wit, some poetry, but nothing that can be properly termed dramatic power. He has a certain crisp, curt monotony of diction and style, which caused him to be spoken of as "eloquent and witty." His persons all speak in precisely the same vein, being indeed but so many empty figures or puppets, reflecting the several motions of the author himself. His dramatic pieces, of which we have nine, seven in prose, one in rhyme, and one in blank-verse, seem to have been originally designed for Court entertainments, but were used more or less on the public stage, chiefly by the juvenile companies. Two of them, Alexander and Campaspe, which is reckoned his best, and Sapho and Phao were printed in 1584; Endymion, in 1591; Galathea, and Midas, in 1592; Mother Bombie, in 1594; Woman in the Moon, in 1597; The Maid's Metamorphosis, in 1600; and Love's Metamorphosis, in 1601. Except Mother Bombie, they are

on classical subjects; and all are replete with that laboured affectation of fine writing which was distinguished at the time as Euphuism. One of his main peculiarities stands in using, for images and illustrations, certain imaginary products of a sort of artificial nature, which he got up especially for that purpose; as if he could invent better material for poetic imagery than ancient Nature had furnished! Still it is not unlikely that we owe to him somewhat of the polish and flexibility of the Shakespearian dramatic diction: that he could have helped the Poet in any thing beyond mere diction, it were absurd to suppose.

Thomas Lodge has before been spoken of as joint author with Greene of A Looking-Glass for London and England. We have but one other play by him, entitled The Wounds of Civil War, and having for its subject "the true tragedies of Marius and Sylla;" written, probably, between 1587 and 1590, but not printed till 1594. It is in blank-verse; which, however, in this case differs from the most regular rhyming ten-syllable verse in nothing but the lack of consonant endings. The following judicious account of it is given by Mr. Collier: "The characters of old Marius and of his younger rival are drawn with great force, spirit, and distinctness, — a task the more difficult, because they so strongly resembled each other in the great leading features of ambition and cruelty. Marius possesses, however, far more generosity and sterner courage than Sylla, who is impetuously tyrannical and wantonly severe; and the old Roman until his death, after his seventh consulship, absorbs the interest of the reader. Young Marius is also introduced, and is distinguished by his fortitude, his constancy, and his affection for his father. Antony is another prominent personage, and is represented gifted with irresistible eloquence, of which many not unfavourable specimens are inserted. There are two females, Cornelia and Fulvia, the wife and daughter of Sylla; the one remarkable for her matronly firmness, and the other for her youthful delicacy and tenderness, which,

however, do not prevent her conducting herself with the resolution becoming a Roman maid. A Clown and various coarsely-comic characters are employed in two scenes, in order to enliven and vary the performance. The plot of the piece is founded chiefly upon the Lives of Marius and Sylla, in Plutarch, and the scene is changed, just as the necessities of the poet required, from Rome to Pontus, Minturnum, and Numidia."

Lodge is chiefly memorable, in that one of his prose pieces was drawn upon for Shakespeare's As You Like It; a sufficient account of which is given in our Introduction to that play.

Some mention has already been made of The Misfortunes of Arthur, an historical drama written by Thomas Hughes, of Gray's Inn, and acted before the Court at Greenwich in 1587. The piece is on several accounts deserving of notice. It was evidently framed in part on the plan of Gorboduc; but the classic form, with the unities of time and place, is carefully followed; and as the scope of a history must needs be too wide for these conditions, narrative is in a large measure substituted for representation, dialogue and description, for action. The plot is as follows: King Arthur having gone into Gaul with an army to resist the claim of tribute by Rome, Mordred, his son, usurps the throne, makes love to Queen Guenevora, his stepmother, and commits incest with her. To maintain his usurpation, he engages the Irish, Picts, Saxons, and Normans on his side; on the landing of his father at Dover, fights with him, is defeated and driven into Cornwall, where another battle takes place, which ends in the father killing the son and the son the father. It is therefore a piece of high-pressure tragedy, redundant of incest, slaughter, and blood, so that nothing could well be more horrible and revolting. Nevertheless, it is written with great boldness and vigour; the character of Mordred is powerfully drawn, while his ambition, youthful confidence, and fiery recklessness are well contrasted

with the milder, more cautious, but not less courageous spirit of Arthur. The blank-verse, too, in which nearly all the piece is written, is superior in force and variety to that of any other dramatic writer before Marlowe.

In respect of versification, the next place after Marlowe among Shakespeare's senior contemporaries probably belongs to Thomas Kyd. Nor is he without very considerable merit in other respects. Mr. Collier has the following judgment of him: "His thoughts are often both new and natural; and if in his plays he dealt largely in blood and death, he only partook of the habit of the time, in which good sense and discretion were often outraged for the purpose of gratifying the crowd. In taste he is inferior to Peele, but in force and character he is his superior; and if Kyd's blank-verse be not quite so smooth it has decidedly more spirit, vigour, and variety."

According to Ben Jonson, Kyd's Hieronimo was first acted in 1588; and his Spanish Tragedy, which is really out a second part of the former, was most probably brought out not long after. The first is about equally divided between rhyme and blank-verse. The main features of the story are the love of Andrea and Belimperia, and the death of the former. The characters of Andrea and his rival Balthezar are forcibly drawn; while the frank and unsuspecting generosity of the former makes an effective contrast with the subtle intricacies of Lorenzo, the nephew and heir-apparent of the Spanish King. The Spanish Tragedy is a far higher performance. After the death of Andrea, his young and faithful friend Horatio, son to the hero of the play, succeeds to his place in the affections of Belimperia. It is upon this that the action turns. Early in the second Act, Horatio is hanged in his father's garden by his rival the Prince of Portugal, and Lorenzo, the lady's brother. During the rest of the play, Hieronimo is in distraction, always meditating revenge, and always postponing the act, till at last his longing [illegible]ated at the representation of a play before the King and

Court of Spain: so that the piece has some points of resemblance to Hamlet. After the murder of Horatio, Lorenzo confines his sister in a tower. In Act iv., Hieronimo comes before the King and Court to demand justice upon the murderers of his son, but is put aside, almost without a struggle, by Lorenzo: soon after, at the casual mention of Horatio's name, the old man starts from his melancholy abstraction, and his mind wanders off in some very pathetic exclamations of anguish for his bereavement, and of impatience for justice on the authors of it. "He sees nothing," says Collier, "but Horatio in every face he looks upon, and all objects take their colour and appearance from his sorrows. His grief is not as sublime, but it is as intense as that of Lear; and he dwells upon the image of his lost Horatio with not less doting agony than Constance."

We have now finished our account of the English Drama, omitting nothing, we believe, that materially contributed to its growth and formation, down to the time when Shakespeare's hand had learnt its cunning, so far, at least, as any previous examples were capable of teaching it. Perhaps we ought to add, as illustrating the prodigious rush of life and thought towards the drama in that age, that, besides the authors already mentioned, Henslowe's Diary shows the names of thirty other dramatists, most of whom have propagated some part of their workmanship down to our time. In the same document, during the twelve years beginning in February, 1591, we have the titles recorded of no less than two hundred and seventy pieces, either as original compositions, or as revivals of older plays. As all these entries have reference only to Henslowe's management; and as, during that period, save for some short intervals, he was concerned with the affairs of but a single company, the Lord Admiral's; we may from thence form some tolerable judgment of the vast fertility of the age in dramatic production.

CHAPTER VI.

GENERAL CRITICISM.

It is evident enough, we trust, from the foregoing chapters, that the Historical Drama grew up simultaneously with Comedy and Tragedy, and established itself as a co-ordinate species of the Gothic Drama in England. This course was dictated and demanded by public taste, and by the intense nationality of the English people, which was, as indeed it always must be, inextricably bound up with traditions of the past, and with the ancient currents of the national life. Perhaps, however, its origin lay, primarily, in the fact of an Historical Religion, impressing its genius and efficacy on the mind and character of the nation. For we may be assured that such as is the religion of a people, such will be their drama: if the one rest upon fable, the other will needs be fabulous; if the former stand on an historical basis, the latter will needs draw more or less into history. And, where an historical religion prevails, the Drama, even when it does not work specifically with the persons and events of history; when it fetches its incidents and characters from the realms of imagination; will still be historical in its spirit and method: the work will proceed according to the *laws*, even while departing from the *matter*, of history; so that pure creations will be formed upon the principles, and in the order and manner of histories. And if, O, if! there arise a workman having the creative powers of a Shakespeare, what he creates will be, in effect, historical, and what he borrows will come from him with all the life and freshness of original creation; because he will assimilate and reproduce the dead matter of fact in the forms of living art.

So that the early and continued use of historical materials on the stage had, unquestionably, great influence in moulding

and determining the form and structure of the English national Drama in all its parts and branches. Now, a dramatic *representation*, in any proper sense of the term, of the events and persons of history is clearly incompatible with the rules of the classic stage: the work requires a larger scope, a broader platform, a more varied and expansive scene: it cannot possibly live and move under the "cold obstruction" of what may be termed the minor unities; and if it undertake to do so, narrative and description will needs, in great part, take the place of representation. In a word, the spirit of Gothic Christian Art could no more be embodied in the forms of the Classic Drama, than the soul of an eagle could organize itself into the body of a fish, or than an acorn could be developed into a violet.

Here, then, was required a principle of compensation. As the mind was taken away from the laws of time and place, it must be delivered over to the higher laws of reason. So that the work lay under the necessity of proceeding in such a way as to make the spectator live in his imagination, not in his senses; and even his senses must, for the time being, be rationalized, and, as it were, made imaginative. That is, instead of the formal or numerical unities of time and place, we must have the unities of intellectual time and intellectual space: the further the artist departed from the local and chronological succession of things, the more strict and manifest must be his observance of their logical and productive succession. Incidents and characters were to be represented, not in the order of sensible juxtaposition or procession, but in that of cause and effect, of principle and consequence. Whether, therefore, they stood ten minutes or ten years, ten feet or ten miles asunder, mattered not, provided they were really and evidently related in this way; that is, provided the unities of action and interest were made strong enough and clear enough to overcome the diversities of time and place. For, here, it is not *where* and *when* a given thing happened, but

how it was produced and why, whence it came and whither it tended, what caused it to be that it was, and to do that it did, that we are mainly concerned with.

Hence the well-known nakedness of the Elizabethan stage in respect of scenic furniture and accompaniment. The weakness, if such it were, was the source of vast strength. It is to this poverty of the old stage that we owe, in great part, the immense riches of the Shakespearian drama, forasmuch as it was thereby laid under a necessity of making up the defect of sensuous impression by working on the rational, moral, and imaginative forces of the audience. And, undoubtedly, the modern way of glutting the senses with a profusion of showy and varied dress and scenery has struck, and always must strike, a dead palsy on the legitimate processes of Gothic art. The decline of the Drama began with its beginning, and has kept pace with its progress. So that here we have a forcible illustration of what is often found true, that men cannot get along because there is nothing to hinder them. For, in respect of the moral and imaginative powers, it may justly be affirmed, that we are often assisted most when not assisted, and that the right way of helping us to walk is by leaving us to walk unhelped. That the soul may find and use her wings, it is better that she be left where there is little for her feet to get hold of and rest upon. How emphatically these positions infer the profound Christian but anti-Romish spirit of the Shakespearian drama, is indeed a great subject, but cannot here be followed out.

The foregoing chapters have also shown, it is hoped, that the Gothic Drama in England was, in the largest sense, a national growth, and not the work of any individual. Neither was it a sudden growth, as indeed nothing truly national ever can be; but, like the British Constitution itself, it was the slow, gradual, silent production of centuries, the result of the thoughts of many minds, in many ages. The whole platform, and all that relates to the formal construction of the work, was fixed before Shakespeare put his hand to it; so

that what remained for him to do, and what he was gifted for doing, was, to rear a grand and beautiful fabric on the basis and according to the principles already settled. And where we like best to contemplate the Poet is, not in the isolation of those excellences which distinguish him above all others, but as having the mind of the nation, with its great past and greater present, to back him up. Nor make we any question that his greatness very much consisted in that, as he had the power, so he gave himself freely to the high task, of mirrouring forth for all time the beatings of old England's mighty heart. He therefore did not go, nor needed he, to books, to learn what others had done: on the contrary, he sucked in without stint, and to the full measure of his angelic capacity, the wisdom and the poetry that lived on the lips, and in the thoughts, feelings, sentiments, and manners of the people. What he thus sucked in, he purged from its drossy mixtures, replenished with fresh vitality, and then gave it back clothed in the grace and strength of his own clear spirit. He told the nation, better, O, how much better! than any others could do, just what it wanted to hear, — the very things which its breast was swelling with, only it found not elsewhere a tongue to voice them, nor an imagination to body them forth.

But, on this point, the Rev. Richard C. Trench, in his lately-published essay on the Genius of Calderon, has some remarks so admirable in themselves, and so fitting to the subject, that the reader, we doubt not, will thank us for quoting them. And we do this the rather because, as the matter in discussion was the joint product of many minds, so it is only by the collective judgment of divers thoughtful observers that sound conclusions respecting it are likely to be reached. For, assuredly, to adopt the language of Burke on another theme, the Shakespearian Drama "takes in too many views, it makes too many combinations, to be so much as comprehended by shallow and superficial understandings. Profound thinkers will know it in its reason and spirit

The less inquiring will recognise it in their feelings and experience." So that the work in question can no more be properly criticised by any one man alone, than Shakespeare could have produced it alone.

"They convey," says Trench, "altogether a wrong impression of Calderon, who, willing to exalt and glorify him the more, isolate him wholly from his age, presenting him to us not as one, the brightest indeed, in a galaxy of lights, but as the sole particular star in the firmament of Spanish dramatic art. Those who derive their impression from the Schlegels, especially from Augustus, would conclude him to stand thus alone, — to stand, if one might venture to employ the allusion, a poetical Melchisedec, without spiritual father, without spiritual mother, with nothing round him to explain or account for the circumstances of his greatness. But there are no such appearances in literature: great artists, poets, or painters, or others, always cluster; the conditions which produce one, produce many. They are not strown, at nearly equable distances, through the life of a nation, but there are periods of great productiveness, with long intervals of comparative barrenness between; or it may be, as indeed was the case with Spain, the aloe-tree of a nation's literature blossoms but once.

"And if this is true in other regions of art, above all will it be true in respect of the drama. In this, when it deserves the name, a nation is uttering itself, what is nearest to its heart, what it has conceived there of life and life's mystery and of a possible reconciliation between the world which now is and that ideal world after which it yearns; and the conditions of a people, which make a great outburst of the drama possible, make it also inevitable that this will utter itself, not by a single voice, but by many. Even Shakespeare himself, towering as he does immeasurably above all his compeers, is not a single, isolated peak, rising abruptly from a level plain, but one of a chain and cluster of mountain-summits; and his altitude, so far from being dwarfed and diminished, can

only be rightly estimated when it is regarded in relation with theirs."

In another part of the same book we have the following just and appropriate passage: "Greece, England, and Spain are the only three countries, in the western world at least, which boast an independent drama, one going its own way, growing out of its own roots; not timidly asking what others have done before, but boldly doing that which its own native impulses urged it to do; the utterance of the national heart and will, accepting no laws from without, but only those which it has imposed on itself, as laws of its true liberty, and not of bondage. The Roman drama and the French are avowedly imitations; nor can all the vigour and even originality in detail, which the former displays, vindicate for it an independent position: much less can the latter, which, at least in the nobler region of tragedy, is altogether an artificial production, claim this; indeed it does not seek to do so, finding its glory in the renunciation of any such claim. Germany has some fine plays, but no national dramatic literature; the same must be said of Italy; and the period has long since passed for both when it would have been possible that this want should be supplied."

After so much said respecting what Shakespeare had in common with others, and what was furnished to his hand in the way of prescription and accumulation, it is now time to speak more particularly of what was original and peculiar to himself.

First and foremost, then, of the things wherein he is specially distinguished from all who went before him, stands, in our view, what we know not better how to designate than as *Dramatic Composition*. Among his predecessors and senior contemporaries, there was, properly speaking, no dramatic artist. What had been done was not truly *art*, but a preparation of materials, and a settlement of the preliminaries of art. Up to his time, there was little more than the elements of the work lying scattered here and there, some in

greater, some in less perfection, and still requiring to be gathered up and combined in right proportions, and under the proper laws of dramatic life. Take any English drama written before his, and you will find that the several parts and particulars do not stand or draw together in any thing like organic consistency and wholeness: the work is not truly a *concrescence* of persons and events, but only, at the best, a mere succession or aggregation of them; so that, for the most part, each would both be and appear just as it does, if detached from the others, and viewed by itself. Instead, therefore, of a vital unity, like that of a tree, the work has but a sort of aggregative unity, like a heap of sand.

Which may, in some fair measure, suggest what we mean by dramatic composition. For a drama, regarded as a work of art, should be, in the strictest sense of the term, a *society*; that is, not merely a numerical collocation or juxtaposition, but a living *contexture* of persons and events. For men's natures do not, neither can they, unfold themselves severally and individually; their development proceeds from, through, and by each other; so that many must grow up together, in order for any one to grow. And, besides their individual circulations, they have a public, common circulation: their characters interpenetrate, more or less, one with another, and stand all together in mutual dependence and support. Nor does this vital coherence and reciprocity hold between the several characters merely, but also between these, taken collectively, and the various conditions, objects, circumstances, influences, amidst which they have grown. So that the whole is like a large, full-grown tree, which is in truth made up of a multitude of little trees, all growing from a common root, nourished by a common sap, and bound together in a common life.

Now, in Shakespeare's dramas — we do not say in all of them, for some were but the work of Shakespeare the apprentice, but in most of them — the several parts, characters and incidents, are knit together in this sort of organic

intertexture, so as to be all truly members one of another. Each needs all the others; each helps all the others; each is made what it is by the presence of all the others. Nothing stands alone; nothing exists merely for itself. The persons not only have each their several development, but also, besides this, and running into this, a development in common. And as each lives and moves and has his being, so each is to be understood and interpreted, with reference, explicit or implicit, to all the others. And there is not only this coherence of the characters represented, one with another, but also of them all with the events and circumstances of the representation. It is from this mutual membership, this participation of each in all, and of all in each, this co-efficient action of all the parts to a common end; it is from this that the work derives its specific character and effect.

So that a drama may be fitly spoken of as an *organic* structure. And such it must be, to answer the conditions of a work of art. Here we have a highly complex thing; a thing made up of divers parts and elements, with a course or circulation of mutual inference and affinity pervading them all, and binding them up together, so as to give to the whole the character of a multitudinous unit; just as in the illustration, before used, of a large tree made up of innumerable little trees. And it seems plain enough, that the larger the number and variety of parts embraced in the work; that the more diversified it is in matter and movement; the greater the strength of art required for keeping every thing within the terms of organic unity; while, provided this be done, the richer and grander also is the impression produced.

Now, this is precisely the highest and hardest part of dramatic creation: in the whole domain of literary workmanship, there is no one thing so rarely attained, none that so few have been found capable of attaining, as this. And yet in this Shakespeare was absolutely — we speak advisedly

— without any teacher or predecessor whatsoever; — not to say, what probably might be said without the least hazard, that it is a thing which no man or number of men could impart; for it seems to be a matter of original gift or endowment, so that no force of instruction or example were adequate to its production. And, in our view of the subject, the most distinguishing feature of the Poet's genius lay in this power of broad and varied combination: his highest and most peculiar gift, we take it, was the deep intuitive perception which thus enabled him to put a multitude of things together, so that each should exactly fit and finish the others. In some of his works, as Pericles, Titus Andronicus, and the three Parts of King Henry VI., though we have, especially in the latter, very considerable skill at individual character, — far more indeed than in any English plays preceding them, — there is certainly little, perhaps nothing, that can be properly called dramatic composition. In several, again, as The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Love's Labour's Lost, and King John, we have but the beginnings and first stages of it. But in divers others, as The Tempest, the First Part of King Henry IV., Antony and Cleopatra, Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello, and King Lear, it is found, if not in entire perfection, at least so nearly perfect, that there has yet been no criticism competent to point out the defect.

We have said that, as regards the matter in hand, Shakespeare was without any instruction or example. For the Classic Drama, had he been ever so well acquainted with it, could not have helped him here at all, if indeed it would not have proved a hindrance to him; and this, because of its essential difference from the Drama in which he was called to work. Which naturally leads us to start a few points of comparison between the two; for we can but start them.

Now, the Classic Drama, like the Classic Architecture, is all light, graceful, airy, in its forms; whereas the Gothic is in nature and design profound, solemn, majestic. Beauty is the life of the one; sublimity, of the other The genius of

that runs to a simple expressiveness; of this, to a manifold suggestiveness. There the mind is drawn more to objects; here, more to relations. As a natural consequence, the Classic detaches things as much as possible, and sets each out by itself in the utmost clearness and definiteness of view; while the Gothic associates and combines them in the largest possible variety consistent with unity of interest and impression, so as to produce the effect of indefiniteness and mystery. Thus the latter is like a vast cathedral, which, by its complexity of structure, while catching the eye would fain lift the thoughts to something greater and better than the world, making the spectator feel his littleness, and even its own littleness, in comparison of that which its suggests. For, in this broad and manifold diversity struggling up into unity, we may recognise the awe-inspiring grandeur and sublimity of the Gothic architecture, as distinguished from the airy, cheerful beauty of the Classic. Such was the difference between the spirit of Classic art and the spirit of Gothic art. The two were of distinct and incommunicable natures; so that no examples of the one could yield any furtherance to the creation of the other.

The peculiarity of Shakespeare, next to be noticed, in respect of those who preceded him, has reference to his mode of conceiving and working out character. We have already seen, that with several writers who went before him characters were discriminated and sustained with considerable judgment and skill. Still we feel a want of reality about them: they are not men and women themselves, but only the outsides and appearances of men and women; often, it is true, having a good measure of coherence and distinctness, but yet mere appearances; with nothing beneath or behind them, to give them real substance and solidity. Of course, therefore, the parts that are actually represented are all that they have; they stand for no more than simply what is shown; there is nothing in them or of them but what meets the spectator's sense; so that, however

good to look at, they will not bear looking into; because the outside, that which is directly seen or heard, really exhausts their whole meaning and significance.

The authors, then, as already intimated, instead of beginning at the heart of a character, and working outwards, began at the surface, and worked the other way; and so were precluded from getting beyond the surface by their mode of procedure. It is as if the shell of an egg should be fully formed and finished, before the contents were prepared; in which case the contents, of course, could not be got into it. It would have to remain a shell, and nothing more: as such, it might do well enough for a show; just as well indeed as if it were full of meat; but it would not stand the weighing; so that none but the poor innocent hens themselves would long be taken in by it.

With Shakespeare, all this is just precisely reversed. His egg is a real egg, brimful of meat, and not an empty shell; and this, because the formation began at the centre, and the shell was formed last. He gives us not the mere imitations or appearances of things, but the very things themselves. His characters *have* more or less of surface, but they *are* solids: what is actually and directly shown, is often the least part of them, never the whole: the rest is left to be inferred; and the showing is so managed, withal, that the inferential process is naturally started and propagated in the spectator's mind.

All which clearly implies that Shakespeare conceived his persons, not from their outside, but in their rudiments and first principles. He begins at the heart of a character, and unfolds it outwards, forming and compacting all the internal parts and organs as he unfolds it; and the development, even because it is a real and true development, proceeds at every step, not by mere addition or aggregation of particulars, but by digestion and vital assimilation of all the matter that enters into the structure; there being sent, in virtue of the life that pervades the thing, just such elements, and

just so much of them, to every organ, as is necessary to its formation. The result of this wonderful process is, that the characters stand for vastly more than is or can be directly seen: there is food for endless thought and reflection in them: beneath and behind the surface, there is all the substance that the surface promises or is able to contain, — an inexhaustible stock of meaning and significance beyond what appears; so that the further they are looked into, the more of truth they are found to contain.

Thus the Poet's genius seems to have dwelt "at Nature's inner shrine, where she works most when we perceive her least." There is, therefore, no extravagance in the justly-celebrated criticism of Pope. "The poetry of Shakespeare," says he, "was inspiration indeed: he is not so much an imitator as an instrument of Nature; and it is not so just to say that he speaks from her, as that she speaks through him. His characters are so much Nature herself, that it is a sort of injury to call them by so distant a name as copies of her."

On this point, we find, in an essay by Mr. Maurice Morgan on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff, some remarks so exceedingly apt and striking, that we cannot make up our mind to withhold them:

"The reader must be sensible of something in the composition of Shakespeare's characters, which renders them essentially different from those drawn by other writers. The characters of every drama must indeed be grouped; but in the groups of other poets the parts which are not seen do not in fact exist. But there is a certain roundness and integrity in the forms of Shakespeare, which give them an independence as well as a relation, insomuch that we often meet with passages which, though perfectly felt, cannot be sufficiently explained in words without unfolding the whole character of the speaker.

"Bodies of all kinds, whether metals, plants, or animals, are supposed to possess certain first principles of *being*, and

to have an existence independent of the accidents which form their magnitude or growth. These accidents are supposed to be drawn in from the surrounding elements, but not indiscriminately; each plant and each animal imbibes those things only which are proper to its own distinct nature, and which have, besides, such a secret relation to each other, as to be capable of forming a perfect union and coalescence: but so variously are the surrounding elements mingled and disposed, that each particular body, even of those under the same species, has yet some *peculiar* of its own. Shakespeare appears to have considered the being and growth of the human mind as analogous to this system. . . .

"The reader will not now be surprised if I affirm that those characters in Shakespeare, which are seen only in part, are yet capable of being unfolded and understood in the whole; every part being in fact relative, and inferring all the rest. It is true that the point of action or sentiment, which we are most concerned in, is always held out for our special notice. But who does not perceive that there is a peculiarity about it, which conveys a relish of the whole? And very frequently, when no particular point presses, he boldly makes a character act and speak from those parts of the composition which are *inferred* only, and not distinctly shown. This produces a wonderful effect; it seems to carry us beyond the Poet to nature itself, and gives an integrity and truth to facts and character, which they could not otherwise obtain. And this is in reality that art in Shakespeare, which, being withdrawn from our notice, we more emphatically call *nature*. A felt propriety and truth from causes unseen, I take to be the highest point of poetic composition. If the characters of Shakespeare are thus *whole*, and, as it were, original, while those of almost all other writers are mere imitation, it may be fit to consider them rather as historic than dramatic beings; and, when occasion requires, to account for their conduct from the *whole* of character. from

general principles, from latent motives, and from policies not avowed."

It is also to be noted, that Shakespeare's characters, generally, are not exhibited in any one fixed state or cast of formation. There is a certain vital limberness and ductility in them, so that upon their essential identity more or less of mutation is ever supervening. They grow on and unfold themselves under our eye: we see them in their course of development, in the act and process of becoming; undergoing divers changes, passing through divers stages, animated by mixed and various motives and impulses, passion alternating with passion, purpose with purpose, train of thought with train of thought; so that they often end greatly modified from what they were at the beginning; the same, and yet another. Thus they have, to our minds, a past and future, as well as a present; and even in what we see of them at any given moment there is involved something both of history and of prophecy.

All this, indeed, is but a part of that complexity which belongs to the spirit of Gothic art in all its forms. So that here we have still further reason, in the nature of the thing, why the Gothic Drama was bound to override and ignore the minor unities. For, as it is unnatural that a man should continue altogether the same character, or subject to the same passion, or absorbed in the same purpose, through a period of ten years; so it is equally against nature, that he should undergo much change of character, or be occupied by various passions, or get engrossed in many purposes, the same day. If, therefore, a character is to be represented under divers phases and fluctuations, the nature of the work evidently requires much length of time, a great variety of objects and influences, and, consequently, a wide range of place. On the other hand, the clearness and simplicity of design and structure, which belong to Classic art, necessarily preclude, in the Drama, any great diversity of time and place; since, as the genius of the work requires character to be

represented only under a single and uniform aspect, the time and place of the representation must needs be limited. So that the same principle which, in the Classic Drama, made it necessary to observe the minor unities, made it equally necessary to disregard them in the Gothic Drama; the complexity of the latter, with its implied vicissitudes of character, being naturally incompatible with them.

Again: The organic fitness and correspondence of part with part, which we have found in Shakespeare's dramatic composition, is equally maintained in his individual characterisation. Now, it is quite notorious, that in his works, far more than in almost any others, every thing appears to come, not from him, but from the characters; and from the characters, too, speaking, not as authors, but simply as men. The reason of which must be, that the word is most admirably suited to the character, the character to the word; every thing exactly fitting into and filling its place. Doubtless there are many things which, considered by themselves, might be bettered; but it is not for themselves that he uses them, but as being characteristic of the persons from whom they proceed; and the fact of their seeming to proceed from the persons, not from him, is the best possible proof of his good judgment in using them. Hence it is, that in reading his works we think not of him, but only of what he is describing: we can scarce realize his existence, his individuality is so lost in the objects and characters he brings before us. That he should have known so perfectly how to avoid giving too much or too little; that he should have let out and drawn in the reins at the precise time and place where the subject required; — this, as it evinces an almost inconceivable delicacy of mind, is also one of the points wherein there was the least to be learned from his predecessors.

And not only does he so select and apportion the several elements of a character that they coalesce into perfect organic wholeness, but also so orders and moves the several characters of a play, as that they may best draw out one

another by mutual influences, and set off each other by mutual contrasts. And not the least wonderful thing in his works is the exquisite congruity of what comes from the persons with all the circumstances and influences under which they are represented as acting; their transpirations of character being, withal, so disposed that the principle of them shines out freely and clearly on the mind. It is true, his persons, like those in real life, act so, chiefly because they are so; but so perfectly does he seize and impart the germ of a character, along with the proper conditions of its development, that the results seem to follow all of their own accord. Thus in his delineations every thing is fitted to every other thing; so that each requires and infers the others, and all hang together in most natural coherence and congruity.

To exemplify this point a little more in detail, let us take his treatment of passion. How many forms, degrees, varieties of passion he has portrayed! yet we are not aware that any instance of unfitness or disproportion has ever been successfully pointed out in his works. With but two or three exceptions at the most, so perfect is the correspondence between the passion and the character, and so freely and fitly does the former grow out of the circumstances in which the latter is placed, that we have no difficulty in justifying and accounting for the passion. So that the passion is thoroughly characteristic, and pervaded with the individuality of its subject. And this holds true not only of different passions, but of different modifications of the same passion; the forms of love, for instance, being just as various and distinct as the characters in which it is shown. Moreover, he unfolds a passion in its rise and progress, its turns and vicissitudes, its ebbings and flowings, so that we go along with it freely and naturally from first to last. Even when, as in case of Ferdinand and Miranda, or of Romeo and Juliet, he ushers in the passion at its full height, he so contrives to throw the mind back or around upon various

predisposing causes and circumstances, as to carry our sympathies through without any revulsion. Now, in this intuitive perception of the exact kind and degree of passion and character that are suited to each other; in this quick, sure insight of the internal workings of a given mind, and the why, when, and how far, it should be moved; and in this accurate letting out and curbing in of a passion, precisely as the law of its individuality requires; he shows himself far beyond the instructions of all who preceded him.

Nor is this the only direction in which he maintains the fitness of things: he keeps the matter right towards us, as well as towards his characters. It is true, he often lays on us burdens of passion that would not be borne in any other writer. But, whether he wrings the heart with pity, or freezes the blood with terror, or fires the soul with indignation, the genial reader still rises from his pages refreshed. The reason of which is, instruction keeps pace with excitement: he strengthens the mind in proportion as he loads it. He has been called the great master of passion: doubtless he is so; yet he makes us think as intensely as he requires us to feel; while opening the deepest fountains of the heart, he at the same time unfolds the highest energies of the head. Nay, with such consummate art does he manage the fiercest tempests of our being, that in a healthy mind the witnessing of them is always attended with an overbalance of pleasure. With the very whirlwinds of passion he so blends the softening and alleviating influences of poetry, that they relish of nothing but sweetness and health. For while, as a philosopher, he surpassed all other philosophers in power to discern the passions of men; as an artist, he also excelled all other artists in skill "so to temper passion, that our ears take pleasure in their pain, and eyes in tears both weep and smile."

Another point which ought not to be passed by in silence is the perfect evenhandedness of Shakespeare's representations. For among all his characters we cannot discover

from the delineation itself that he preferred any one to another; though of course we cannot imagine it possible for any man to regard Edmund and Edgar, for example, or Iago and Desdemona, with the same feelings. It is as if the scenes of his drama were forced on his observation against his will, himself being under a solemn oath to report the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. He thus uniformly leaves the characters to make their own impression on us: he is their mouthpiece, not they his; and because he would not serve as the advocate of any, therefore he was able to stand as the representative of all. With the honour or shame, the right or wrong, of their actions, he has nothing to do: that they are so, and act so, is their concern, not his; and his business is, not to reform nor deprave, not to censure nor approve them, but simply to tell the truth about them, whithersoever it may lead him. Accordingly, he is not wont to exhibit either utterly worthless or utterly faultless monsters; persons too good or too bad to exist; too high to be loved, or too low to be pitied: even his worst characters (unless we should except Goneril and Regan, and even their blood is red like ours) have some slight fragrance of humanity about them, some indefinable touches, which redeem them from utter hatred and execration, and keep them within the pale of human sympathy, or at least of human pity.

Nor does he bring in any characters as the mere shadows, or instruments, or appendages of others. All the persons, high and low, contain within themselves the reason why they are there and not elsewhere, why they are so and not otherwise. None are forced in upon the scene merely to supply the place of others, and so to be trifled with till the others are ready to return; but each is treated in his turn as though he were the main character of the piece. So true is this, that even if one character comes in as the satellite of another, he does so by a right and an impulse of his own; he is all the while but obeying, or rather executing the law of

his individuality, and has just as much claim on the other for a primary, as the other has on him for a satellite. The consequence is, that all the characters are developed, not indeed at equal length, but with equal perfectness as far as they go; for, to make the dwarf fill the same space as the giant, were to dilute, not develope, the dwarf.

Passing allusion has already been made once or twice to Shakespeare's humour. This is so large and so operative an element of his genius, that something further ought to be said of it. And perhaps there is nothing in his composition of which it is more difficult to give a satisfactory account. For it is nowise a distinct or separable thing with him, acting alone or occasionally, and so to be viewed by itself, but a perfusive and permeating ingredient of his make-up: it acts as a sort of common solvent, in which different and even opposite lines of thought, states of mind, and forms of life are melted into happy reconcilement and co-operation. Through this, as a kind of pervading and essential sap, is carried on a free intercourse and circulation between the moral and intellectual parts of his being; and hence, perhaps, in part, that wonderful catholicity of mind which generally marks his representations.

It naturally follows from this that the Poet's humour is widely diversified in its exhibitions. There is indeed no part of him that acts with greater versatility. It imparts a certain wholesome earnestness to his most sportive moods, making them like the honest and whole-hearted play of childhood, than which human life has nothing that proceeds more in earnest. For who has not found it a property of childhood, to be serious in its fun, innocent in its mischief, ingenuous in its guile? Moreover, it is easy to remark that in Shakespeare's greatest dunces and simpletons and potentates of nonsense there is something that prevents contempt. A fellow-feeling springs up between us and them: our pleasure in them is mainly from what they have in common with us; it is through our sympathetic, not our selfish emotions

that they interest us: we are far more inclined to laugh with them than at them, and even when we laugh at them we love them the more for that which is laughable in them. So that our delight in them still rests upon a basis of fraternal sentiment, and our intercourse with them proceeds under the great law of kindness and charity. Try this with any of the Poet's illustrious groups of comic personages, and it will be found, we apprehend, thoroughly true. What distinguishes us from them, or sets us above them in our own esteem, is never appealed to as a source or element of delectation. So that the pleasure we have of them is altogether *social* in its nature, and humanizing in its effect, ever knitting more widely the bonds of sympathy.

Here we have what may be called a foreground of comedy, but the Poet's humour keeps up a living circulation between this and the serious elements of our being that stand behind it. It is true, we are not always, nor perhaps often, conscious of any stirring in these latter: what is laughable occupies the surface, and is therefore all that we directly see. But still there are deep undercurrents of earnest sentiment moving not the less really that their movement is noiseless. In the disguise of sport and mirth there is a secret discipline of humanity going on; and the effect is all the better that it steals into us unseen and unsuspected: we know that we laugh, but we do something better than laugh without knowing it, and so we are made the better by our laughter; for in that which makes us better without our knowledge, we are doubly benefited.

Not indeed but that Shakespeare has characters, as, for example, the Steward in King Lear, which are thoroughly contemptible, and which we follow with contempt. But it is to be observed that there is nothing laughable in Oswald, nothing that we can either laugh with or laugh at: he is but a sort of human reptile, such as life sometimes produces, whom we regard with moral loathing and disgust, but in whose company neither mirth nor pity can find any foothold

The feelings moved by a Bottom, a Dogberry, an Aguecheek, or a Slender are indeed very different from those which wait upon a Cordelia, an Ophelia, or a Desdemona, but there is no essential oppugnance between them: in both these cases the heart moves by the laws of sympathy which is exactly reversed in the case of such an object as Oswald: the former all touch us through what we have in common with them; the latter touches only through our antipathies. There is therefore nothing of either comic or tragic in the part of Oswald viewed by itself; on the contrary, it moves in entire oppugnance to the proper sentiments of both comedy and tragedy.

Much of what we have said touching Shakespeare's scenes of mirth holds true, conversely, of his tragic scenes. For it is a great mistake to suppose that his humour has its sole exercise in comic representations. It carries the power of tears as well as of smiles: in his deepest strains of tragedy there is often a subtle infusion of it, and that in such a way as to heighten the tragic effect; we may feel it playing delicately beneath his most pathetic scenes, and deepening their pathos. For in his hands tragedy and comedy are not made up of different elements, but of the same elements standing in different places and relations: what is background in the one becomes foreground in the other; what is an undercurrent in the one becomes an uppercurrent in the other; the effect of the whole depending almost, perhaps altogether, as much on what is not directly seen, as on what is. So that with him the pitiful and the ludicrous, the sublime and the droll, are like the greatness and littleness of human life; for these qualities not only coexist in our being, but, which is much more, they coexist under a mysterious law of interdependence and reciprocity; insomuch that our life may in some sense be said to be great because little, and little because great.

And as Shakespeare's transports of humour draw down more or less into the depths of serious thought, and make

our laughter the more refreshing and exhilarating because of what is moving silently beneath; so his tragic ecstacies take a richness of colour and flavour from the humour held in secret reserve, and forced up to the surface now and then by the superincumbent weight of tragic matter. This it is, in part, that truly makes them "awful mirth." For who does not know, that the most winning smiles are those which play round a moistening eye, and tell of serious thoughts beneath; and that the saddest face is that which wears in its expression an air of remembered joy, and speaks darkly of sunshine in the inner courts of the soul? For we are so made, that no one part of our being moves to perfection, unless all the other parts move with it: when we are at work, whatever there is of the playful within us ought to play; when we are at play, our working energies ought to bear a part in the exercise. It is this harmonious movement of all the organs of our being that makes the proper music of life.

We cannot, nor need we, stay to illustrate the point in hand at any length, by detailed reference to the Poet's dramas; for this belongs to the office of particular criticism, and so is, or ought to be, duly attended to in our Introductions to the several plays. The Fool's part in King Lear will readily occur to any one familiar with that tragedy. And perhaps there is no one part of Hamlet that does more to heighten the tragic effect, than the droll scene with the grave-diggers. But, besides this, there is a vein of humour running through the part of Hamlet himself, underlying his most serious hours, and giving depth and mellowness to his strains of impassioned thought. And every reflecting reader must have observed how much is added to the impression of terror in the trial scene of The Merchant of Venice, by the jets of fierce mirth with which Gratiano assails old Shylock; and also how, at the close of the scene, our very joy at Antonio's deliverance quickens and deepens our pity for the broken-hearted Jew who lately stood before us dressed

in such fulness of terror. But indeed the Poet's skill at heightening any feeling by awakening its opposite; how he manages to give strength to our most earnest sentiments by touching some spring of playfulness; is matter of common observation.

But the Poet's humour has yet other ways of manifesting itself. And among these not the least remarkable is the subtle and delicate irony which often pervades his scenes, and sometimes gives character to whole plays, as in the case of Troilus and Cressida, and Antony and Cleopatra. By methods that can hardly be described, he contrives to establish a sort of secret understanding with the reader, so as to arrest the impression just as it is on the point of becoming tragic. While dealing most seriously with his characters, he uses a certain guile: through them we catch, as it were, a roguish twinkle of his eye, which makes us aware that his mind is secretly sporting itself with their earnestness, so that we have a double sympathy with their passion and with his play. Thus his humour often acts in such a way as to possess us with mixed emotions: the persons, while moving us with their thoughts, at the same time start us upon other thoughts which have no place in them; and we share in all that they feel, but still are withheld from committing ourselves to them, or so taking part with them as to foreclose a due regard to other claims.

We shall dismiss the subject with a very remarkable piece of criticism by Coleridge, which is so full of large thoughts felicitously expressed, that, in our view, it ought to go with every future edition of the Poet that pretends to have any critical accompaniments. It is as follows:

"It is a painful truth that not only individuals, but even whole nations, are ofttimes so enslaved to the habits of their education and immediate circumstances, as not to judge disinterestedly even on those subjects, the very pleasure arising from which consists in its disinterestedness, namely, on sub-

jects of taste and polite literature. Instead of deciding concerning their own modes and customs by any rule of reason, nothing appears rational, becoming, or beautiful to them, but what coincides with the peculiarities of their education. In this narrow circle, individuals may attain to exquisite discrimination, as the French critics have done in their own literature; but a true critic can no more be such without placing himself on some central point, from which he may command the whole, that is, some general rule, which, founded in reason, or the faculties common to all men, must therefore apply to each, — than an astronomer can explain the movements of the solar system without taking his stand in the sun. And let me remark, that this will not tend to produce despotism, but, on the contrary, true tolerance, in the critic. He will, indeed, require, as the spirit and substance of a work, something true in human nature itself, and independent of all circumstances; but in the mode of applying it, he will estimate genius and judgment according to the felicity with which the imperishable soul of intellect shall have adapted itself to the age, the place, and the existing manners. The error he will expose lies in reversing this, and holding up the mere circumstances as perpetual, to the utter neglect of the power which can alone animate them. For art cannot exist without, or apart from, nature; and what has man to give to his fellow-man, but his own thoughts and feelings, and his observations, so far as they are modified by his thoughts or feelings?

"Let me, then, once more submit this question to minds emancipated alike from national, or party, or sectarian prejudice: Are the plays of Shakespeare works of rude uncultivated genius, in which the splendour of the parts compensates, if aught can compensate, for the barbarous shapelessness and irregularity of the whole? Or is the form equally admirable with the matter, and the judgment of the great Poet not less deserving our wonder than his genius? — Or again, to repeat the question in other words: Is Shake-

speare a great dramatic poet on account only of those beauties and excellences which he possesses in common with the ancients, but with diminished claims to our love and honour to the full extent of his differences from them? Or are these very differences additional proofs of poetic wisdom, at once results and symbols of living power as contrasted with lifeless mechanism, — of free and rival originality as contradistinguished from servile imitation, or, more accurately, a blind copying of effects, instead of a true imitation of the essential principles? — Imagine not that I am about to oppose genius to rules. No! the comparative value of these rules is the very cause to be tried. The spirit of poetry, like all other living powers, must of necessity circumscribe itself by rules, were it only to unite power with beauty. It must embody in order to reveal itself; but a living body is of necessity an organized one; and what is organization but the connection of parts in and for a whole, so that each part is at once end and means? This is no discovery of criticism; it is a necessity of the human mind; and all nations have felt and obeyed it, in the invention of metre, and measured sounds, as the vehicle and *involucrum* of poetry, — itself a fellow-growth from the same life, — even as the bark is to the tree!

"No work of true genius dares want its appropriate form, neither indeed is there any danger of this. As it must not, so genius cannot, be lawless; for it is even this that constitutes it genius, — the power of acting creatively under laws of its own origination. How, then, comes it that not only single *Zoili*, but whole nations have combined in unhesitating condemnation of our great dramatist, as a sort of African nature, rich in beautiful monsters; as a wild heath where islands of fertility look the greener from the surrounding waste, where the loveliest plants now shine out among unsightly weeds, and now are choked by their parasitic growth, so intertwined that we cannot disentangle the weed without snapping the flower? — In this statement I have had

no reference to the vulgar abuse of Voltaire, save as far as his charges are coincident with the decisions of Shakespeare's own commentators and (so they would tell you) almost idolatrous admirers. The true ground of the mistake lies in the confounding mechanical regularity with organic form. The form is mechanic, when on any given material we impress a predetermined form, not necessarily arising out of the properties of the material; as when to a mass of wet clay we give whatever shape we wish it to retain when hardened. The organic form, on the other hand, is innate; it shapes, as it developes, itself from within, and the fulness of its development is one and the same with the perfection of its outward form. Such as the life is, such is the form. Nature, the prime genial artist, inexhaustible in diverse powers, is equally inexhaustible in forms; — each exterior is the physiognomy of the being within, its true image reflected and thrown out from the concave mirror: and even such is the appropriate excellence of her chosen Poet, of our own Shakespeare; himself a nature humanized, a genial understanding directing self-consciously a power and an implicit wisdom deeper even than our consciousness.

"I greatly dislike beauties and selections in general; but as proof positive of his unrivalled excellence, I should like to try Shakespeare by this criterion. Make out your amplest catalogue of all the human faculties, as reason or the moral law, the will, the feeling of the coincidence of the two called the conscience, the understanding or prudence, wit, fancy, imagination, judgment; and then of the objects on which these are to be employed, as the beauties, the terrors, and the seeming caprices of nature, the realities and the capabilities, that is, the actual and the ideal, of the human mind, conceived as an individual or as a social being, as in innocence or in guilt, in a play-paradise, or in a war-field of temptation; — and then compare with Shakespeare under each of these heads all or any of the writers in prose and verse that have ever lived! Who, that is competent to

judge, doubts the result? And ask your own hearts, — ask your own common-sense, — to conceive the possibility of this man being, — I say not, the drunken savage of that wretched sciolist, whom Frenchmen, to their shame, have honoured before their elder and better worthies, — but the anomalous, the wild, the irregular genius of our daily criticism! What! are we to have miracles in sport? Or, I speak reverently, does God choose idiots by whom to convey divine truths to man?

"Poetry in essence is as familiar to barbarous as to civilized nations. The Laplander and the savage Indian are cheered by it as well as the inhabitants of London and Paris: its spirit takes up and incorporates surrounding materials, as a plant clothes itself with soil and climate, whilst it exhibits the working of a vital principle within independent of all accidental circumstances. And, to judge with fairness of an author's works, we ought to distinguish what is inward and essential from what is outward and circumstantial. It is essential to poetry that it be simple, and appeal to the elements and primary laws of our nature; that it be sensuous, and by its imagery elicit truth at a flash; that it be impassioned, and be able to move our feelings and awaken our affections. In comparing different poets with each other, we should inquire which have brought into the fullest play our imagination and our reason, or have created the greatest excitement and produced the completest harmony. If we consider great exquisiteness of language and sweetness of metre alone, it is impossible to deny to Pope the character of a delightful writer; but whether he be a poet, must depend upon our definition of the word; and, doubtless, if every thing that pleases be poetry, Pope's satires and epistles must be poetry. This I must say, that poetry, as distinguished from other modes of composition, does not rest in metre; and that it is not poetry, if it make no appeal to our passions or our imagination. One character belongs to all true poets, that they write from a principle within, not originating in any

thing without; and that the true poet's work in its form, its shapings, and its modifications, is distinguished from all other works that assume to belong to the class of poetry, as a natural from an artificial flower, or as the mimic garden of a child from an enamelled meadow. In the former the flowers are broken from their stems and stuck into the ground; they are beautiful to the eye and fragrant to the sense, but their colours soon fade, and their odour is transient as the smile of the planter; — while the meadow may be visited again and again with renewed delight; its beauty is innate in the soil, and its bloom is of the freshness of nature.

"The next ground of critical judgment, and point of comparison, will be as to how far a given poet has been influenced by accidental circumstances. As a living poet must surely write, not for the ages past, but for that in which he lives, and those which are to follow, it is, on the one hand, natural that he should not violate, and, on the other, necessary that he should not depend on, the mere manners and modes of his day. See how little does Shakespeare leave us to regret that he was born in his particular age! The great era in modern times was what is called the Restoration of Letters: the ages preceding it are called the dark ages; but it would be more wise, perhaps, to call them the ages in which we were in the dark. It is usually overlooked that the supposed dark period was not universal, but partial and successive, or alternate; that the dark age of England was not the dark age of Italy, but that one country was in its light and vigour, whilst another was in its gloom and bondage. But no sooner had the Reformation sounded through Europe like the blast of an archangel's trumpet, than from king to peasant there arose an enthusiasm for knowledge; the discovery of a manuscript became the subject of an embassy; Erasmus read by moonlight, because he could not afford a torch, and begged a penny, not for the love of charity, but for the love of learning. The three great points of atten-

tion were religion, morals, and taste: men of genius as well as men of learning, who in this age need to be so widely distinguished, then alike became copyists of the ancients; and this, indeed, was the only way by which the taste of mankind could be improved, or their understandings informed. Whilst Dante imagined himself an humble follower of Virgil, and Ariosto of Homer, they were both unconscious of that greater power working within them, which in many points carried them beyond their supposed originals. All great discoveries bear the stamp of the age in which they are made: — hence we perceive the effects of the purer religion of the moderns, visible for the most part in their lives; and in reading their works we should not content ourselves with the mere narratives of events long since passed, but should learn to apply their maxims and conduct to ourselves.

"Having intimated that times and manners lend their form and pressure to genius, let me once more draw a slight parallel between the ancient and modern stage, the stages of Greece and of England. The Greeks were polytheists; their religion was local; almost the only object of all their knowledge, art, and taste, was their gods; and, accordingly, their productions were, if the expression may be allowed, statuesque, whilst those of the moderns are picturesque. The Greeks reared a structure, which in its parts, and as a whole, filled the mind with the calm and elevated impression of perfect beauty and symmetrical proportion. The moderns also produced a whole, a more striking whole; but it was by blending materials and fusing the parts together. And as the Pantheon is to York Minster or Westminster Abbey, so is Sophocles compared with Shakespeare: in the one a completeness, a satisfaction, an excellence, on which the mind rests with complacency; in the other a multitude of interlaced materials, great and little, magnificent and mean, accompanied, indeed, with the sense of a falling short of perfection, and yet, at the same time, so promising of our

social and individual progression, that we would not, if we could, exchange it for that repose of the mind which dwells on the forms of symmetry in the acquiescent admiration of grace. This general characteristic of the ancient and modern drama might be illustrated by a parallel of the ancient and modern music: the one consisting of melody arising from a succession only of pleasing sounds; the modern embracing harmony also, the result of combination and the effect of a whole.

"I have said, and I say it again, that great as was the genius of Shakespeare, his judgment was at least equal to it. Of this any one will be convinced, who attentively considers those points in which the dramas of Greece and England differ, from the dissimilitude of circumstances by which each was modified and influenced. The Greek stage had its origin in the ceremonies of a sacrifice, such as of the goat to Bacchus, whom we most erroneously regard as merely the jolly god of wine; for among the ancients he was venerable, as the symbol of that power which acts without our consciousness in the vital energies of nature, — the *vinum mundi*, — as Apollo was that of the conscious agency of our intellectual being. The heroes of old under the influences of this Bacchic enthusiasm performed more than human actions: hence tales of the favourite champions soon passed into dialogue. On the Greek stage the chorus was always before the audience; the curtain was never dropped, as we should say; and change of place being therefore, in general, impossible, the absurd notion of condemning it merely as improbable in itself was never entertained by any one. If we can believe ourselves at Thebes in one act, we may believe ourselves at Athens in the next. If a story lasts twenty-four hours or twenty-four years, it is equally improbable. There seems to be no just boundary but what the feelings prescribe. But on the Greek stage, where the same persons were perpetually before the audience, great judgment was necessary in venturing on any such change. The

poets never, therefore, attempted to impose on the senses by bringing places to men, but they did bring men to places, as in the well-known instance in the Eumenides, where, during an evident retirement of the chorus from the orchestra, the scene is changed to Athens, and Orestes is first introduced in the temple of Minerva, and the chorus of Furies come in afterwards in pursuit of him.

"In the Greek drama there were no formal divisions into scenes and acts; there were no means, therefore, of allowing for the necessary lapse of time between one part of the dialogue and another, and unity of time in a strict sense was, of course, impossible. To overcome that difficulty of accounting for time, which is effected on the modern stage by dropping a curtain, the judgment and great genius of the ancients supplied music and measured motion, and with the lyric ode filled up the vacuity. In the story of the Agamemnon of Æschylus, the capture of Troy is supposed to be announced by a fire lighted on the Asiatic shore, and the transmission of the signal by successive beacons to Mycenæ. The signal is first seen at the 21st line, and the herald from Troy itself enters at the 486th, and Agamemnon himself at the 783d line. But the practical absurdity of this was not felt by the audience, who, in imagination, stretched minutes into hours, while they listened to the lofty narrative odes of the chorus which almost entirely filled up the interspace. Another fact deserves attention here, namely, that regularly on the Greek stage a drama, or acted story, consisted in reality of three dramas, called together a trilogy, and performed consecutively in the course of one day. Now, you may conceive a tragedy of Shakespeare's as a trilogy connected in one single representation. Divide Lear into three parts, and each would be a play with the ancients; or take the three Æschylean dramas of Agamemnon, and divide them into, or call them, as many acts, and they together would be one play. The first act would comprise the usurpation of Ægisthus, and the murder of Agamemnon; the

second, the revenge of Orestes, and the murder of his mother; and the third, the penance and absolution of Orestes · — occupying a period of twenty-two years.

"The stage in Shakespeare's time was a naked room with a blanket for a curtain; but he made it a field for monarchs. That law of unity, which has its foundations, not in the factitious necessity of custom, but in nature itself, the unity of feeling, is every where and at all times observed by Shakespeare in his plays. Read Romeo and Juliet: — all is youth and spring; — youth with its follies, its virtues, its precipitancies; — spring with its odours, its flowers, and its transiency; it is one and the same feeling that commences, goes through, and ends the play. The old men, the Capulets and the Montagues, are not common old men; they have an eagerness, a heartiness, a vehemence, the effect of spring: with Romeo, his change of passion, his sudden marriage, and his rash death, are all the effects of youth; — whilst in Juliet love has all that is tender and melancholy in the nightingale, all that is voluptuous in the rose, with whatever is sweet in the freshness of spring; but it ends with a long deep sigh like the last breeze of the Italian evening. This unity of feeling and character pervades every drama of Shakespeare.

"It seems to me that his plays are distinguished from those of all other dramatic poets by the following characteristics:

"1. Expectation in preference to surprise. It is like the true reading of the passage; — 'God said, Let there be light, and there was *light*;' not there *was* light. As the feeling with which we startle at a shooting star compared with that of watching the sunrise at the pre-established moment, such and so low is surprise compared with expectation.

"2. Signal adherence to the great law of nature, that all opposites tend to attract and temper each other. Passion in Shakespeare generally displays libertinism, but involves morality; and if there are exceptions to this, they are, in

dependently of their intrinsic value, all of them indicative of individual character, and, like the farewell admonitions of a parent, have an end beyond the parental relation. Thus the Countess's beautiful precepts to Bertram, by elevating her character, raise that of Helena her favourite, and soften down the point in her which Shakespeare does not mean us not to see, but to see and to forgive, and at length to justify. And so it is in Polonius, who is the personified memory of wisdom no longer actually possessed. This admirable character is always misrepresented on the stage. Shakespeare never intended to exhibit him as a buffoon; for although it was natural that Hamlet — a young man of fire and genius, detesting formality, and disliking Polonius on political grounds, as imagining that he had assisted his uncle in his usurpation — should express himself satirically; yet this must not be taken as exactly the Poet's conception of him. In Polonius a certain induration of character had arisen from long habits of business; but take his advice to Laertes, and Ophelia's reverence for his memory, and we shall see that he was meant to be represented as a statesman somewhat past his faculties; his recollections of life all full of wisdom, and showing a knowledge of human nature, whilst what immediately takes place before him, and escapes from him, is indicative of weakness.

"But as in Homer all the deities are in armour, even Venus; so in Shakespeare all the characters are strong. Hence real folly and dulness are made by him the vehicles of wisdom. There is no difficulty for one being a fool to imitate a fool; but to be, remain, and speak like a wise man and a great wit, and yet so as to give a vivid representation of a veritable fool, — *hic labor, hoc opus est.* A drunken constable is not uncommon, nor hard to draw; but see and examine what goes to make up a Dogberry.

"3. Keeping at all times in the high road of life. Shakespeare has no innocent adulteries, no interesting incests, no virtuous vice: he never renders that amiable which religion

and reason alike teach us to detest, or clothes impurity in the garb of virtue, like Beaumont and Fletcher, the Kotzebues of the day. Shakespeare's fathers are roused by ingratitude, his husbands stung by unfaithfulness; in him, in short, the affections are wounded in those points in which all may, nay, must, fee.. Let the morality of Shakespeare be contrasted with that of the writers of his own or the succeeding age, or of those of the present day, who boast their superiority in this respect. No one can dispute that the result of such a comparison is altogether in favour of Shakespeare; even the letters of women of high rank in his age were often coarser than his writings. If he occasionally disgusts a keen sense of delicacy, he never injures the mind; he neither excites nor flatters passion, in order to degrade the subject of it; he does not use the faulty thing for a faulty purpose, nor carries on warfare against virtue, by causing wickedness to appear as no wickedness, through the medium of a morbid sympathy with the unfortunate. In Shakespeare vice never walks as in twilight; nothing is purposely out of its place: he inverts not the order of nature and propriety, — does not make every magistrate a drunkard or glutton, nor every poor man meek, humane, and temperate; he has no benevolent butchers, nor any sentimental rat-catchers.

"4. Independence of the dramatic interest on the plot. The interest in the plot is always in fact on account of the characters, not *vice versa*, as in almost all other writers; the plot is a mere canvass and no more. Hence arises the true justification of the same stratagem being used in regard to Benedick and Beatrice, — the vanity in each being alike. Take away from the Much Ado about Nothing all that which is not indispensable to the plot, either as having little to do with it, or, at best, like Dogberry and his comrades, forced into the service, when any other less ingeniously absurd watchmen and night-constables would have answered the mere necessities of the action; — take away Benedick,

Beatrice, Dogberry, and the reaction of the former on the character of Hero, — and what will remain? In other writers the main agent of the plot is always the prominent character; in Shakespeare it is so, or is not so, as the character is in itself calculated, or not calculated, to form the plot. Don John is the main-spring of the plot of this play but he is merely shown and then withdrawn.

"5. Independence of the interest on the story as the ground-work of the plot. Hence Shakespeare never took the trouble of inventing stories. It was enough for him to select from those that had been already invented or recorded such as had one or other, or both, of two recommendations, namely, suitableness to his particular purpose, and their being parts of popular tradition, — names of which we had often heard, and of their fortunes, and as to which all we wanted was, to see the man himself. So it is just the man himself, the Lear, the Shylock, the Richard, that Shakespeare makes us for the first time acquainted with. Omit the first scene in Lear, and yet every thing will remain; so the first and second scenes in The Merchant of Venice. Indeed it is universally true.

"6. Interfusion of the lyrical — that which in its very essence is poetical — not only with the dramatic, as in the plays of Metastasio, where at the end of the scene comes the *aria* as the *exit* speech of the character, — but also in and through the dramatic. Songs in Shakespeare are introduced as songs only, just as songs are in real life, beautifully as some of them are characteristic of the person who has sung or called for them, as Desdemona's 'Willow,' and Ophelia's wild snatches, and the sweet carollings in As You Like It. But the whole of A Midsummer-Night's Dream is one continued specimen of the dramatized lyrical.

"7. The characters of the *dramatis personæ*, like those in real life, are to be inferred by the reader; they are not told to him. And it is well worth remarking that Shakespeare's characters, like those in real life. are very commonly

misunderstood, and almost always understood by different persons in different ways. The causes are the same in either case. If you take only what the friends of the character say, you may be deceived, and still more so, if that which his enemies say; nay, even the character himself sees himself through the medium of his character, and not exactly as he is. Take all together, not omitting a shrewd hint from the clown or the fool, and perhaps your impression will be right; and you may know whether you have in fact discovered the Poet's own idea, by all the speeches receiving light from it, and attesting its reality by reflecting it.

"Lastly, in Shakespeare the heterogeneous is united, as it is in nature. You must not suppose a pressure or passion always acting on or in the character! — passion in Shakespeare is that by which the individual is distinguished from others, not that which makes a different kind of him. Shakespeare followed the main march of the human affections. He entered into no analysis of the passions or faiths of men, but assured himself that such and such passions and faiths were grounded in our common nature, and not in the mere accidents of ignorance or disease. This is an important consideration, and constitutes our Shakespeare the morning star, the guide and the pioneer, of true philosophy."

THE

POEMS AND SONNETS

OF

SHAKESPEARE.

INTRODUCTION

TO

VENUS AND ADONIS.

THE first edition of VENUS AND ADONIS was a quarto pamphlet of twenty-seven leaves, the latter part of the title-page reading thus: "London. Imprinted by Richard Field, and are to be sold at the sign of the white Greyhound in Paul's Church-yard. 1593." On the 18th of April, 1593, the poem was entered at the Stationers' by Field, as "his copy, licensed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Wardens." A second edition was made by the same publisher in 1594. There were also editions of it, by John Harrison in 1596 and 1600, and by William Leake in 1602. After this time it was often republished, and copies are known, bearing the dates of 1616 and 1620. It was also printed at Edinburgh by John Wreittoun in 1627.

This frequency of publication sufficiently witnesses the great popularity of the poem. It is often alluded to, also, by the Poet's contemporaries, and in such terms as show it to have been a general favourite. Meres, in his Wit's Treasury, 1598, speaks of it thus: "As the soul of Euphorbus was thought to live in Pythagoras, so the sweet, witty soul of Ovid lives in mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare: witness his Venus and Adonis, his Lucrece, his sugared Sonnets among his private friends." What use was sometimes made of it, may be inferred from Sharpe's Noble Stranger, 1640, where Pupillus exclaims, — "O, for the book of Venus and Adonis, to court my mistress by!"

The tenth book of Ovid's Metamorphoses, as translated by Arthur Golding, probably furnished Shakespeare the story of Venus and Adonis. Golding's translation was first published complete in 1567, and reissued in 1572, 1584, 1587, and 1593; so that it must have had a large circulation when the poem was written. The Poet evidently worked upon the plan of concentrating all the interest on the passion of the goddess, and took only so much of the story as would directly serve this end. His treatment of the subject is eminently original and inventive; his genius playing

with, perhaps, all the freedom it could find out of the Drama, where alone he could be thoroughly at home. The story is also briefly told in Spenser's description of the tapestry of Castle Joyous, and in The Shepherd's Song of Venus and Adonis, by Henry Constable, published in England's Helicon, 1600. But Shakespeare's use and treatment of the subject are altogether different from Spenser's. Constable was not known as a poet till 1594, when his Diana was published; and, as The Shepherd's Song was not included in that collection, we may presume that it had not then been written.

In the dedication of Venus and Adonis, Shakespeare speaks of it as "the first heir of his invention;" yet he had then become so distinguished in the Drama as to be squibbed by Robert Greene, and patronized by the Earl of Southampton. The greater part of Greene's squib is quoted in our Life of the Poet, Chapter iii. Whether Shakespeare dated the heirship of his poem from the time of writing or of publishing, is uncertain: probably the former; and if so, then of course it must have been written several years before 1593. The general opinion refers the composition of the poem to the period before he left Stratford; but this is a point on which we are without evidence of any sort either way.

The merit of Venus and Adonis, and indeed of the author's poems generally, sinks into littleness beside that of his dramas. We have already seen how great was its contemporary popularity. This excessive applause was followed by a long period of undue neglect or depreciation; but in later times the fashion has rather been to overpraise it. Hazlitt, who wrote at the time when this fashion was at its height, and who could hardly see an extravagance in one direction without becoming equally extravagant in the opposite, delivers himself on the subject as follows: "In his plays, Shakespeare was 'as broad and casing as the general air:' in his poems, on the contrary, he appears to be 'coop'd and cabin'd in' by all the technicalities of art, by all the petty intricacies of thought and language which poetry had learned from the controversial jargon of the schools, where words had been made a substitute for things. His imagination, by identifying itself with the strongest characters in the most trying circumstances, grappled at once with nature, and trampled the littleness of art under its feet: the rapid changes of situation, the wide range of the universe, gave him life and spirit, and afforded full scope to his genius; but, returned into his closet again, and having assumed the badge of his profession, he could only labour in his vocation, and conform himself to existing models."

In this extract, the writer, as usual, has a knack of *suggesting* the truth while departing from it. Hazlitt is comparing the poems, not with the dramas written at or near the same time, but with those of a much later date, when the Poet, after working by "existing models," had constructed an art of his own. In his poems

Shakespeare does indeed impress us rather as proceeding by rule and imitation, than by the free inspiration of genius and nature: he is not himself, but rather what others had been before him; and we have repeatedly seen, especially in our Introductions to The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Love's Labour's Lost, Titus Andronicus, and Pericles, that the same is almost equally true of his earlier dramas. He had not then found himself, and perhaps it was only by working awhile as others had done, that he could find himself. The inferiority, then, of the poems grew not so much from the conditions of the work, as from the state of his own mind: it was not merely because they were not dramas, but partly because his genius was not then mature, that they fall below the measure of his powers.

But, much as the poems carry the air of imitations, they show, withal, that he could not imitate without surpassing his models. Venus and Adonis abounds in verbal and fantastical tricks and antics caught from the taste and fashion of the age: often it may be said of the Poet, that he appears "singling out the difficulties of the art, to make an exhibition of his strength and skill in wrestling with them." But what fulness of life and spirit there is in it! what richness and delicacy of imagery! what fresh, and airy, and subtle turns of invention and combination! Coleridge, in his *Biographia Literaria*, has the following remarks upon it:

"In the Venus and Adonis, the first and most obvious excellence is the perfect sweetness of the versification; its adaptation to the subject; and the power displayed in varying the march of the words without passing into a loftier and more majestic rhythm than was demanded by the thoughts, or permitted by the propriety of preserving a sense of melody predominant. The delight in richness and sweetness of sound, even to a faulty excess, if it be evidently original, and not the result of an easily imitable mechanism, I regard as a highly favourable promise in the compositions of a young man. 'The man that hath not music in his soul' can indeed never be a genuine poet. Imagery; affecting incidents; just thoughts; interesting personal or domestic feelings; and with these the art of their combination or intertexture in the form of a poem; may all, by incessant effort, be acquired as a trade, by a man of talents and much reading, who has mistaken an intense desire of poetic reputation for a natural poetic genius. But the sense of musical delight, with the power of producing it, is a gift of imagination; and this, together with the power of reducing multitude into unity of effect, and modifying a series of thoughts by some one predominant thought or feeling, may be cultivated and improved, but can never be learnt. It is in this sense that *Poeta nascitur, non fit.*

"A second promise of genius is the choice of subjects very remote from the private interests and circumstances of the writer himself. At least I have found, that where the subject is taken

immediately from the author's personal sensations and experiences the excellence of a particular poem is but an equivocal mark, and often a fallacious pledge, of genuine poetic power. In the Venus and Adonis, this proof of poetic power exists even to excess. It is throughout as if a superior spirit, more intuitive, more intimately co iscious, even than the characters themselves, not only of every outward look and act, but of the flux and reflux of the mind in all its subtlest thoughts and feelings, were placing the whole before our view; himself, meanwhile, unparticipating in the passions, and actuated only by that pleasurable excitement, which had resulted from the energetic fervour of his own spirit, in so vividly exhibiting what it had so accurately and profoundly contemplated. I think I should have conjectured, that even the great instinct which impelled the Poet to the drama was secretly working in him, prompting him by a series and never-broken chain of imagery, always vivid, and, because unbroken, often minute; by the highest effort of the picturesque in words, of which words are capable higher perhaps than was ever realized by any other poet, even Dante not excepted; to provide a substitute for that visual language, that constant intervention and running comment, by tone, look, and gesture, which in his dramatic works he was entitled to expect from the players. His Venus and Adonis seem at once the characters themselves, and the whole representation of those characters by consummate actors. You seem to be *told* nothing, but to see and hear every thing.

"Hence it is, that from the perpetual activity of attention required on the part of the reader; from the rapid flow, the quick change, and the playful nature of the thoughts and images; and, above all, from the alienation, and, if I may hazard such an expression, the utter *aloofness* of the Poet's own feelings, from those of which he is at once the painter and the analyst; that though the very subject cannot but detract from the pleasure of a delicate mind, yet never was poem less dangerous on a moral account. Instead of doing as Ariosto, and as, still more offensively, Wieland has done; instead of degrading and deforming passion into appetite, the trials of love into the struggles of concupiscence, Shakespeare has here represented the animal impulse itself so as to preclude all sympathy with it, by dissipating the reader's notice among the thousand outward images, and now beautiful, now fanciful circumstances, which forms its dresses and scenery; or by diverting our attention from the main subject by those frequent witty or profound reflections, which the Poet's ever-active mind has deduced from, or connected with, the imagery and the incidents. The reader is forced into too much action to sympathize with the merely passive of our nature. As little can a mind thus roused and awakened be brooded on by mean and indistinct emotion, as the low, lazy mist can creep upon the surface of a lake, while a strong gale is driving it onward in waves and billows."

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

HENRY WRIOTHESLY,

EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON, AND BARON OF TICHFIELD.[1]

RIGHT HONOURABLE: I know not how I shall offend in dedicating my unpolished lines to your lordship, nor

[1] This nobleman, the third Earl of Southampton, was born the 6th of October, 1573, became a student of St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1585, and proceeded Master of Arts in 1589. Three years later, he was admitted to the same degree at Oxford. At the time of this dedication, 1593, he was twenty years of age. He was early distinguished for his attachment to literature, his patronage of Shakespeare having begun before the taking of his degree at Oxford. In his dedication of The Rape of Lucrece, 1594, the Poet delicately intimates the favours he had already received from his youthful patron. In 1597 Southampton embarked as a volunteer in the expedition against Spain, under Essex, being appointed captain of one of the principal ships. He afterwards had the command of a squadron, and was knighted by Essex for his gallantry in a situation of great peril. The next year he went with Essex into Ireland, and was there made General of the Horse; but the Queen would not suffer him to hold the place, as he had married a cousin of Essex without her consent. On the fall of Essex, he was sent to the Tower, where he was kept during the rest of Elizabeth's reign. Not long after his release, he was made governor of the Isle of Wight; but, being secretly accused of too great intimacy with the Queen, King James had him arrested: the accusation, however, being unsustained, he was discharged, and afterwards retired in disgust to Spa. He was with Lord Herbert of Cherbury at the siege of Rees; returned to England in 1619, and was appointed a member of the Privy Council: but he again incurred the royal displeasure by going with the popular party, and was for a short time in the custody of the Dean of Westminster. In 1624 he had the command of a small force against the Spaniards in the Low Countries, and died of a fever at Bergen-op-Zoom, on the 10th of November that year. He received many tributes and testimonies of honour from the scholars and higher wits of his time; but his friendship for Shakespeare has given his name and character an abiding interest. Camden tells us that he was as well known for his love of letters as for his military exploits;

how the world will censure me for choosing so strong a prop to support so weak a burden: only, if your Honour seem but pleased, I account myself highly praised, and vow to take advantage of all idle hours, till I have honoured you with some graver labour. But, if the first heir of my invention prove deformed, I shall be sorry it had so noble a god-father, and never after ear so barren a land,[2] for fear it yield me still so bad a harvest. I leave it to your honourable survey, and your Honour to your heart's content; which I wish may always answer your own wish, and the world's hopeful expectation.

Your Honour's in all duty,

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

and Sir John Beaumont, after commending his public and private virtues, speaks of his liberality to men of genius and learning as his highest title to praise:

> "I keep that glory last, which is the best;
> The love of learning, which he oft express'd
> By conversation, and respect to those
> Who had a name in arts, in verse or prose." H.

[2] To *ear* is the old word for to *plough:* hence *earable* or *arable.* So in All's Well that Ends Well, Act i. sc. 3: "He that *ears* my land spares my team, and gives me leave to inn the crop." See, also, King Richard II., Act iii. sc. 2, note 15. H.

VENUS AND ADONIS.

Vilia miretur vulgus, mihi flavus Apollo
Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua. OVID.

ARGUMENT.

Venus in vain endeavours to inspire her favourite Adonis with a mutual passion, and to dissuade him from a too eager pursuit of the pleasures of the chase. The youth rejects the overtures, and disregards the advice of the goddess, and is mortally wounded by a wild boar: his body is changed into a flower called anemone by his disconsolate mistress, who, after tenderly lamenting his untimely death, is conveyed in the clouds to Paphos.

EVEN as the sun with purple-colour'd face
Had ta'en his last leave of the weeping morn,
Rose-cheek'd Adonis hied him to the chase;
Hunting he lov'd, but love he laugh'd to scorn:
Sick-thoughted Venus makes amain unto him,
And like a bold-fac'd suitor 'gins to woo him.

Thrice fairer than myself, (thus she began,)
The field's chief flower, sweet above compare,
Stain to all nymphs, more lovely than a man,
More white and red than doves or roses are;
Nature that made thee, with herself at strife,
Saith that the world hath ending with thy life.

Vouchsafe, thou wonder, to alight thy steed,
And rein his proud head to the saddle-bow;
If thou wilt deign this favour, for thy meed
A thousand honey secrets shalt thou know.

Here come and sit, where never serpent hisses,
And, being set, I'll smother thee with kisses:

And yet not cloy thy lips with loath'd satiety,
But rather famish them amid their plenty,
Making them red and pale with fresh variety;
Ten kisses short as one, one long as twenty:
A summer's day will seem an hour but short,
Being wasted in such time-beguiling sport.

With this, she seizeth on his sweating palm,
The precedent of pith and livelihood,
And, trembling in her passion, calls it balm,
Earth's sovereign salve to do a goddess good:
Being so enrag'd, desire doth lend her force
Courageously to pluck him from his horse.

Over one arm the lusty courser's rein,
Under her other was the tender boy,
Who blush'd and pouted in a dull disdain,
With leaden appetite, unapt to toy;
She red and hot as coals of glowing fire,
He red for shame, but frosty in desire.

The studded bridle on a ragged bough
Nimbly she fastens; (O, how quick is love!)
The steed is stalled up, and even now
To tie the rider she begins to prove:
Backward she push'd him, as she would be thrust,
And govern'd him in strength, though not in lust.

So soon was she along, as he was down,
Each leaning on their elbows and their hips:
Now doth she stroke his cheek, now doth he frown,
And 'gins to chide, but soon she stops his lips;
And kissing speaks, with lustful language broken
If thou wilt chide, thy lips shall never open.

He burns with bashful shame, she with her tears
Doth quench the maiden burning of his cheeks;
Then, with her windy sighs and golden hairs,
To fan and blow them dry again she seeks:
He saith she is immodest, blames her 'miss;[1]
What follows more, she murders with a kiss.

Even as an empty eagle, sharp by fast,
Tires with her beak on feathers, flesh, and bone,[2]
Shaking her wings, devouring all in haste,
Till either gorge be stuff'd, or prey be gone,
Even so she kiss'd his brow, his cheek, his chin,
And where she ends she doth anew begin.

Forc'd to content,[3] but never to obey,
Panting he lies, and breatheth in her face:
She feedeth on the steam, as on a prey,
And calls it heavenly moisture, air of grace;
Wishing her cheeks were gardens full of flowers,
So they were dew'd with such distilling showers.

Look, how a bird lies tangled in a net,
So fasten'd in her arms Adonis lies;
Pure shame and aw'd resistance made him fret,
Which bred more beauty in his angry eyes:
Rain, added to a river that is rank,[4]
Perforce will force it overflow the bank.

Still she intreats, and prettily intreats,
For to a pretty ear she tunes her tale;

[1] *Amiss* was not unfrequently used as a substantive, meaning, of course, something done amiss. — In the next line, the first three editions have *murders;* later editions, *smothers.* H.

[2] To *tire* is to *tear*, or *feed* upon, as a bird of prey. See Henry VI., Act i. sc. 1, note 14. H.

[3] That is, compelled to acquiescence, or forced *to be* content. H.

[4] That is, a river already *full*. So in Drayton's Barons Wars "Fetching full tides, luxurious, high, and *rank*" H.

Still is he sullen, still he lowers and frets,
'Twixt crimson shame, and anger ashy-pale:
Being red, she loves him best; and, being white,
Her best is better'd with a more delight.

Look how he can, she cannot choose but love;
And by her fair immortal hand she swears
From his soft bosom never to remove,
Till he take truce with her contending tears,
Which long have rain'd, making her cheeks all wet;
And one sweet kiss shall pay this countless debt.

Upon this promise did he raise his chin,
Like a dive-dapper peering through a wave,[5]
Who, being look'd on, ducks as quickly in;
So offers he to give what she did crave;
But, when her lips were ready for his pay,
He winks, and turns his lips another way.

Never did passenger, in summer's heat,
More thirst for drink than she for this good turn:
Her help she sees, but help she cannot get;
She bathes in water, yet her fire must burn
O, pity, 'gan she cry, flint-hearted boy!
'Tis but a kiss I beg: why art thou coy?

I have been woo'd, as I intreat thee now,
Even by the stern and direful god of war,
Whose sinewy neck in battle ne'er did bow;
Who conquers where he comes, in every jar:
Yet hath he been my captive and my slave,
And begg'd for that which thou unask'd shalt have.

Over my altars hath he hung his lance,
His batter'd shield, his uncontrolled crest;
And for my sake hath learn'd to sport and dance,
To toy, to wanton, dally, smile, and jest;

[5] A *dive-dapper* is a *didapper* or *dabchick*, a species of Colymbus

Scorning his churlish drum, and ensign red,
Making my arms his field, his tent my bed.

Thus he that over-rul'd, I oversway'd,
Leading him prisoner in a red-rose chain:
Strong-temper'd steel his stronger strength obey'd,
Yet was he servile to my coy disdain.
O! be not proud, nor brag not of thy might,
For mastering her that foil'd the god of fight.

Touch but my lips with those fair lips of thine,
(Though mine be not so fair, yet are they red,)
The kiss shall be thine own as well as mine.
What seest thou in the ground? hold up thy head:
Look in mine eye-balls, there thy beauty lies;
Then, why not lips on lips, since eyes in eyes?

Art thou asham'd to kiss? then, wink again,
And I will wink; so shall the day seem night:
Love keeps his revels where there are but twain;
Be bold to play, our sport is not in sight:
These blue-vein'd violets, whereon we lean,
Never can blab, nor know not what we mean.

The tender spring upon thy tempting lip
Shows thee unripe, yet may'st thou well be tasted.
Make use of time, let not advantage slip;
Beauty within itself should not be wasted:
Fair flowers, that are not gather'd in their prime,
Rot and consume themselves in little time.

Were I hard-favour'd, foul, or wrinkled-old,
Ill-nurtur'd, crooked, churlish, harsh in voice,
O'er-worn, despised, rheumatic, and cold,
Thick-sighted, barren, lean, and lacking juice,
Then might'st thou pause, for then I were not for thee;
But, having no defects, why dost abhor me?

Thou canst not see one wrinkle in my brow;
Mine eyes are gray and bright,[6] and quick in turning;
My beauty as the spring doth yearly grow;
My flesh is soft and plump, my marrow burning:
My smooth moist hand, were it with thy hand felt,
Would in thy palm dissolve, or seem to melt.[7]

Bid me discourse, I will enchant thine ear;
Or, like a fairy, trip upon the green;
Or, like a nymph, with long dishevell'd hair,
Dance on the sands, and yet no footing seen:
Love is a spirit all compact of fire;[8]
Not gross to sink, but light, and will aspire.

Witness this primrose bank whereon I lie:
These forceless flowers like sturdy trees support me;
Two strengthless doves will draw me through the sky,
From morn till night, even where I list to sport me:
Is love so light, sweet boy; and may it be,
That thou should'st think it heavy unto thee?

Is thine own heart to thine own face affected?
Can thy right hand seize love upon thy left?
Then woo thyself, be of thyself rejected,
Steal thine own freedom, and complain on theft.
Narcissus so himself himself forsook,
And died to kiss his shadow in the brook.

[6] *Gray* eyes were the same as are now called *blue.* See Romeo and Juliet, Act ii. sc. 4, note 7. H.

[7] What moisture of hand was thought to indicate, is shown in Antony and Cleopatra, Act i. sc. 2: "Nay, if an *oily palm* be not a fruitful prognostication, I cannot scratch mine ear." And in Othello, Act iii. sc. 4: "Here's a young and *sweating devil* here, that commonly rebels. 'Tis a good *hand;* a frank one." H.

[8] That is, all *made up* or *composed* of fire; as in the phrase, "of imagination all *compact.*" H.

Torches are made to light, jewels to wear,
Dainties to taste, fresh beauty for the use,
Herbs for their smell, and sappy plants to bear;
Things growing to themselves are growth's abuse:
Seeds spring from seeds, and beauty breedeth beauty:
Thou wast begot; to get, it is thy duty.

Upon the earth's increase why should'st thou feed,
Unless the earth with thy increase be fed?
By law of nature thou art bound to breed,
That thine may live when thou thyself art dead;
And so in spite of death thou dost survive,
In that thy likeness still is left alive.

By this, the love-sick queen began to sweat,
For where they lay the shadow had forsook them;
And Titan, 'tired in the mid-day heat,
With burning eye did hotly overlook them;
Wishing Adonis had his team to guide,
So he were like him, and by Venus' side.

And now Adonis, with a lazy sprite,
And with a heavy, dark, disliking eye,
His lowering brows o'erwhelming his fair sight,
Like misty vapours, when they blot the sky,
Souring his cheeks, cries, Fie! no more of love:
The sun doth burn my face; I must remove.

Ah me! (quoth Venus,) young, and so unkind?
What bare excuses mak'st thou to be gone!
I'll sigh celestial breath, whose gentle wind
Shall cool the heat of this descending sun:
I'll make a shadow for thee of my hairs;
If they burn too, I'll quench them with my tears.

The sun that shines from heaven, shines but warm,
And, lo! I lie between that sun and thee:
The heat I have from thence doth little harm,
Thine eye darts forth the fire that burneth me;

And were I not immortal, life were done,
Between this heavenly and earthly sun.

Art thou obdurate, flinty, hard as steel?
Nay, more than flint, for stone at rain relenteth
Art thou a woman's son, and canst not feel
What 'tis to love? how want of love tormenteth?
O! had thy mother borne so hard a mind,
She had not brought forth thee, but died unkind.[9]

What am I, that thou should'st contemn me this?
Or what great danger dwells upon my suit?
What were thy lips the worse for one poor kiss?
Speak, fair; but speak fair words, or else be mute
Give me one kiss; I'll give it thee again;
And one for interest, if thou wilt have twain.

Fie! lifeless picture, cold and senseless stone,
Well-painted idol, image dull and dead,
Statue, contenting but the eye alone;
Thing like a man, but of no woman bred:
Thou art no man, though of a man's complexion;
For men will kiss even by their own direction.

This said, impatience chokes her pleading tongue,
And swelling passion doth provoke a pause;
Red cheeks and fiery eyes blaze forth her wrong:
Being judge in love, she cannot right her cause;
And now she weeps, and now she fain would speak,
And now her sobs do her intendments break.

Sometimes she shakes her head, and then his hand
Now gazeth she on him, now on the ground;
Sometimes her arms infold him like a band:
She would, he will not in her arms be bound;
And when from thence he struggles to be gone,
She locks her lily fingers, one in one.

[9] That is, died *childless*, or *without any of her kind*.

Fondling, she saith, since I have hemm'd thee here,
Within the circuit of this ivory pale,
I'll be a park, and thou shalt be my deer:
Feed where thou wilt, on mountain or in dale;
Graze on my lips, and, if those hills be dry,
Stray lower, where the pleasant fountains lie.

Within this limit is relief enough;
Sweet bottom-grass, and high delightful plain,
Round rising hillocks, brakes obscure and rough,
To shelter thee from tempest and from rain:
Then, be my deer, since I am such a park;
No dog shall rouse thee, though a thousand bark.

At this Adonis smiles, as in disdain,
That in each cheek appears a pretty dimple:
Love made those hollows; if himself were slain,
He might be buried in a tomb so simple;
Foreknowing well, if there he came to lie,
Why, there Love liv'd, and there he could not die.

These lovely caves, these round enchanting pits,
Open'd their mouths to swallow Venus' liking.
Being mad before, how doth she now for wits?
Struck dead at first, what needs a second striking!
Poor queen of love, in thine own law forlorn,
To love a cheek that smiles at thee in scorn!

Now which way shall she turn? what shall she say?
Her words are done, her woes the more increasing;
The time is spent, her object will away,
And from her twining arms doth urge releasing.
Pity! she cries; some favour, some remorse![10]
Away he springs, and hasteth to his horse.

[10] The more common meaning of *remorse* in the Poet's time was *compassion* or *tenderness*. H.

But, lo! from forth a copse that neighbours by
A breeding jennet, lusty, young, and proud,
Adonis' trampling courser doth espy,
And forth she rushes, snorts, and neighs aloud:
The strong-neck'd steed, being tied unto a tree,
Breaketh his reign, and to her straight goes he.

Imperiously he leaps, he neighs, he bounds,
And now his woven girths he breaks asunder;
The bearing earth with his hard hoof he wounds,
Whose hollow womb resounds like heaven's thunder;
The iron bit he crusheth 'tween his teeth,
Controlling what he was controlled with.

His ears up-prick'd, his braided hanging mane
Upon his compass'd crest now stands on end;[11]
His nostrils drink the air, and forth again,
As from a furnace, vapours doth he send;
His eye, which scornfully glisters like fire,
Shows his hot courage and his high desire.

Sometime he trots, as if he told the steps,
With gentle majesty and modest pride;
Anon he rears upright, curvets and leaps,
As who should say, lo! thus my strength is tried
And this I do, to captivate the eye
Of the fair breeder that is standing by.

What recketh he his rider's angry stir,
His flattering holla, or his "Stand, I say?"
What cares he now for curb, or pricking spur?
For rich caparisons, or trapping gay?
He sees his love, and nothing else he sees,
For nothing else with his proud sight agrees.

Look, when a painter would surpass the life,
In limning out a well-proportion'd steed,

[11] *Compass'd* for *arched*.

His art with nature's workmanship at strife,
As if the dead the living should exceed;
So did this horse excel a common one,
In shape, in courage, colour, pace, and bone.

Round-hoof'd, short-jointed, fetlocks shag and long,
Broad breast, full eye, small head, and nostril wide,
High crest, short ears, straight legs, and passing strong,
Thin mane, thick tail, broad buttock, tender hide:
Look, what a horse should have, he did not lack,
Save a proud rider on so proud a back.

Sometime he scuds far off, and there he stares;
Anon he starts at stirring of a feather:
To bid the wind a base[12] he now prepares,
And whe'r he run or fly, they know not whether,
For through his mane and tail the high wind sings,
Fanning the hairs, who wave like feather'd wings.

He looks upon his love, and neighs unto her;
She answers him, as if she knew his mind:
Being proud, as females are, to see him woo her,
She puts on outward strangeness, seems unkind;
Spurns at his love, and scorns the heat he feels,
Beating his kind embracements with her heels.

Then, like a melancholy malcontent,
He vails his tail,[13] that, like a falling plume,
Cool shadow to his melting buttock lent:
He stamps, and bites the poor flies in his fume.
His love, perceiving how he is enrag'd,
Grew kinder, and his fury was assuag'd.

[12] That is, to challenge the wind to a contest for superiority *Base* is a rustic game, sometimes termed *prison-base*, or *prison-bars*. See Cymbeline, Act v. sc. 3, note 1.

[13] To *vail* is to *lower* or let *fall*. See The Merchant of Venice. Act i. sc. 1, note 3. H.

His testy master go'th about to take him;
When, lo! the unback'd breeder, full of fear,
Jealous of catching, swiftly doth forsake him,
With her the horse, and left Adonis there.
As they were mad, unto the wood they hie them,
Outstripping crows that strive to over-fly them.

All swol'n with chafing,[14] down Adonis sits,
Banning his boisterous and unruly beast;
And now the happy season once more fits,
That love-sick Love by pleading may be blest;
For lovers say, the heart hath treble wrong,
When it is barr'd the aidance of the tongue.

An oven that is stopp'd, or river stay'd,
Burneth more hotly, swelleth with more rage;
So of concealed sorrow may be said:
Free vent of words love's fire doth assuage;
But, when the heart's attorney once is mute,
The client breaks, as desperate in his suit.

He sees her coming, and begins to glow,
Even as a dying coal revives with wind,
And with his bonnet hides his angry brow;
Looks on the dull earth with disturbed mind,
Taking no notice that she is so nigh,
For all askance he holds her in his eye.

O! what a sight it was, wistly to view
How she came stealing to the wayward boy;
To note the fighting conflict of her hue,
How white and red each other did destroy:
But now her cheek was pale, and by and by
It flash'd forth fire, as lightning from the sky.

[14] The first three editions have *chafing;* that of 1600 misprints *chasing*, and is commonly followed in modern editions. — *Banning*, in the next line, is *cursing*. H.

Now was she just before him as he sat,
And like a lowly lover down she kneels;
With one fair hand she heaveth up his hat,
Her other tender hand his fair cheek feels:
His tenderer cheek receives her soft hand's print,
As apt as new-fall'n snow takes any dint.

O, what a war of looks was then between them!
Her eyes, petitioners, to his eyes suing;
His eyes saw her eyes as they had not seen them;
Her eyes woo'd still, his eyes disdain'd the wooing
And all this dumb play had his acts[15] made plain
With tears, which, chorus-like, her eyes did rain.

Full gently now she takes him by the hand,
A lily prison'd in a jail of snow,
Or ivory in an alabaster band;
So white a friend engirts so white a foe:
This beauteous combat, wilful and unwilling,
Show'd like two silver doves that sit a-billing.

Once more the engine of her thoughts began:
O, fairest mover on this mortal round!
Would thou wert as I am, and I a man;
My heart all whole as thine, thy heart my wound;[16]
For one sweet look thy help I would assure thee,
Though nothing but my body's bane would cure thee.

Give me my hand, saith he; why dost thou feel it!
Give me my heart, saith she, and thou shalt have it:
O! give it me, lest thy hard heart do steel it,
And, being steel'd, soft sighs can never grave it:
Then love's deep groans I never shall regard,
Because Adonis' heart hath made mine hard.

[15] We have often seen that *his* was constantly used for *its* in the Poet's time, the latter not being then a legitimate word. — The closing couplet of this stanza is an evident allusion to the dumb shows, and accompanying choruses of the old stage. H.

[16] Thy heart wounded as mine is

For shame! he cries; let go, and let me go;
My day's delight is past, my horse is gone,
And 'tis your fault I am bereft him so:
I pray you, hence, and leave me here alone;
For all my mind, my thought, my busy care,
Is how to get my palfrey from the mare.

Thus she replies: Thy palfrey, as he should,
Welcomes the warm approach of sweet desire:
Affection is a coal that must be cool'd;
Else, suffer'd, it will set the heart on fire:
The sea hath bounds, but deep desire hath none;
Therefore no marvel though thy horse be gone.

How like a jade he stood, tied to the tree,
Servilely master'd with a leathern rein!
But when he saw his love, his youth's fair fee,
He held such petty bondage in disdain;
Throwing the base thong from his bending crest,
Enfranchising his mouth, his back, his breast.

Who sees his true-love in her naked bed,
Teaching the sheets a whiter hue than white,
But, when his glutton eye so full hath fed,
His other agents aim at like delight?
Who is so faint, that dare not be so bold
To touch the fire, the weather being cold?

Let me excuse thy courser, gentle boy;
And learn of him, I heartily beseech thee,
To take advantage on presented joy;
Though I were dumb, yet his proceedings teach thee.
O! learn to love; the lesson is but plain,
And, once made perfect, never lost again.

I know not love, quoth he, nor will not know it,
Unless it be a boar, and then I chase it:

'Tis much to borrow, and I will not owe it;
My love to love is love but to disgrace it;[17]
For I have heard it is a life in death,
That laughs, and weeps, and all but with a breath

Who wears a garment shapeless and unfinish'd?
Who plucks the bud before one leaf put forth?
If springing things be any jot diminish'd,
They wither in their prime, prove nothing worth.
The colt that's back'd and burden'd being young,
Loseth his pride, and never waxeth strong.

You hurt my hand with wringing; let us part,
And leave this idle theme, this bootless chat:
Remove your siege from my unyielding heart;
To love's alarms it will not ope the gate.
Dismiss your vows, your feigned tears, your flattery;
For where a heart is hard, they make no battery.

What! canst thou talk? quoth she; hast thou a tongue?
O, would thou hadst not, or I had no hearing!
Thy mermaid's voice hath done me double wrong;
I had my load before, now press'd with bearing:
Melodious discord, heavenly tune harsh-sounding,
Ear's deep sweet music, and heart's deep sore wounding.

Had I no eyes, but ears, my ears would love
That inward beauty and invisible;
Or, were I deaf, thy outward parts would move
Each part in me that were but sensible:
Though neither eyes nor ears, to hear nor see,
Yet should I be in love by touching thee.

[17] My inclination towards love is only a desire to render it contemptible.

Say, that the sense of feeling were bereft me,
And that I could not see, nor hear, nor touch,
And nothing but the very smell were left me,
Yet would my love to thee be still as much;
For from the stillatory of thy face excelling[18]
Comes breath perfum'd, that breedeth love by smelling.

But O! what banquet wert thou to the taste,
Being nurse and feeder of the other four:
Would they not wish the feast might ever last,
And bid Suspicion double-lock the door;
Lest Jealousy, that sour unwelcome guest,
Should by his stealing-in disturb the feast?

Once more the ruby-colour'd portal open'd,
Which to his speech did honey passage yield;
Like a red morn, that ever yet betoken'd
Wreck to the seaman, tempest to the field,
Sorrow to shepherds, woe unto the birds,
Gusts and foul flaws[19] to herdmen and to herds.

This ill presage advisedly she marketh:
Even as the wind is hush'd before it raineth,
Or as the wolf doth grin before he barketh,
Or as the berry breaks before it staineth;
Or, like the deadly bullet of a gun,
His meaning struck her ere his words begun.

And at his look she flatly falleth down;
For looks kill love, and love by looks reviveth
A smile recures the wounding of a frown;
But blessed bankrupt, that by loss so thriveth!
The silly boy, believing she is dead,
Claps her pale cheek, till clapping makes it red;

[18] *Stillatory* is an obsolete word meaning the same as *laboratory*. H.

[19] *Flaws* are sudden blasts of wind.

And all-amaz'd brake off his late intent,
For sharply he did think to reprehend her,
Which cunning love did wittily prevent;
Fair fall the wit that can so well defend her!
For on the grass she lies as she were slain,
Till his breath breatheth life in her again.

He wrings her nose, he strikes her on the cheeks,
He bends her fingers, holds her pulses hard;
He chafes her lips; a thousand ways he seeks
To mend the hurt that his unkindness marr'd;
He kisses her; and she, by her good will,
Will never rise, so he will kiss her still.

The night of sorrow now is turn'd to day.
Her two blue windows faintly she upheaveth,
Like the fair sun, when in his fresh array
He cheers the morn, and all the earth relieveth:[90]
And as the bright sun glorifies the sky,
So is her face illumin'd with her eye;

Whose beams upon his hairless face are fix'd,
As if from thence they borrow'd all their shine.
Were never four such lamps together mix'd,
Had not his clouded with his brows' repine;
But hers, which through the crystal tears gave light,
Shone like the moon in water seen by night.

O! where am I? quoth she; in earth or heaven,
Or in the ocean drench'd, or in the fire?
What hour is this? or morn, or weary even?
Do I delight to die, or life desire?
But now I liv'd, and life was death's annoy;
But now I died, and death was lively joy.

O! thou didst kill me;—kill me once again:
Thy eyes' shrewd tutor, that hard heart of thine,

[90] All the old editions except the first have *world* instead of *earth*

Hath taught them scornful tricks, and such disdain,
That they have murder'd this poor heart of mine;
And these mine eyes, true leaders to their queen,
But for thy piteous lips no more had seen.

Long may they kiss each other, for this cure!
O, never let their crimson liveries wear!
And, as they last, their verdure still endure,
To drive infection from the dangerous year!
That the star-gazers, having writ on death,
May say, the plague is banish'd by thy breath.

Pure lips, sweet seals in my soft lips imprinted,
What bargains may I make, still to be sealing?
To sell myself I can be well contented,
So thou wilt buy, and pay, and use good dealing,
Which purchase if thou make, for fear of slips[21]
Set thy seal-manual on my wax-red lips.

A thousand kisses buys my heart from me;
And pay them at thy leisure, one by one.
What is ten hundred touches unto thee?
Are they not quickly told, and quickly gone?
Say, for non-payment that the debt should double,
Is twenty hundred kisses such a trouble?

Fair queen, quoth he, if any love you owe me,
Measure my strangeness with my unripe years:
Before I know myself, seek not to know me;
No fisher but the ungrown fry forbears:
The mellow plum doth fall, the green sticks fast,
Or, being early pluck'd, is sour to taste.

Look, the world's comforter, with weary gait,
His day's hot task hath ended in the west:

[21] *Slips* was a term for certain counterfeit coin. See Romeo and Juliet, Act ii. sc. 4, note 9. E.

The owl, night's herald, shrieks, 'tis very late;
The sheep are gone to fold, birds to their nest;
And coal-black clouds, that shadow heaven's light,
Do summon us to part, and bid good night.

Now let me say good night, and so say you;
If you will say so, you shall have a kiss.
Good night, quoth she; and, ere he says adieu,
The honey fee of parting tender'd is:
Her arms do lend his neck a sweet embrace;
Incorporate then they seem, face grows to face,

Till breathless he disjoin'd, and backward drew
The heavenly moisture, that sweet coral mouth,
Whose precious taste her thirsty lips well knew,
Whereon they surfeit, yet complain on drought:
He with her plenty press'd, she faint with dearth.
Their lips together glued, fall to the earth.

Now quick Desire hath caught the yielding prey.
And glutton-like she feeds, yet never filleth;
Her lips are conquerors, his lips obey,
Paying what ransom the insulter willeth;
Whose vulture thought doth pitch the price so high,
That she will draw his lips' rich treasure dry:

And, having felt the sweetness of the spoil,
With blindfold fury she begins to forage;
Her face doth reek and smoke, her blood doth boil,
And careless lust stirs up a desperate courage;
Planting oblivion, beating reason back,
Forgetting shame's pure blush, and honour's wrack.

Hot, faint, and weary with her hard embracing,
Like a wild bird being tam'd with too much handling;
Or as the fleet-foot roe, that's tired with chasing;
Or like the froward infant, still'd with dandling;

He now obeys, and now no more resisteth,
While she takes all she can, not all she listeth.

What wax so frozen but dissolves with tempering,
And yields at last to every light impression?
Things out of hope are compass'd oft with venturing,
Chiefly in love, whose leave exceeds commission:
Affection faints not like a pale-fac'd coward,
But then wooes best, when most his choice is froward.

When he did frown, O! had she then gave over,
Such nectar from his lips she had not suck'd.
Foul words and frowns must not repel a lover:
What though the rose have prickles, yet 'tis pluck'd:
Were beauty under twenty locks kept fast,
Yet love breaks through, and picks them all at last.

For pity now she can no more detain him;
The poor fool prays her that he may depart:
She is resolv'd no longer to restrain him;
Bids him farewell, and look well to her heart,
The which, by Cupid's bow she doth protest,
He carries thence encaged in his breast.

Sweet boy, she says, this night I'll waste in sorrow,
For my sick heart commands mine eyes to watch.
Tell me, love's master, shall we meet to-morrow?
Say, shall we? shall we? wilt thou make the match?
He tells her, no; to-morrow he intends
To hunt the boar with certain of his friends.

The boar! quoth she; whereat a sudden pale,
Like lawn being spread upon the blushing rose,
Usurps her cheek: she trembles at his tale,
And on his neck her yoking arm she throws;
She sinketh down, still hanging by his neck;
He on her belly falls, she on her back.

Now is she in the very lists of love,
Her champion mounted for the hot encounter:
All is imaginary she doth prove;
He will not manage her, although he mount her;
That worse than Tantalus' is her annoy,
To clip Elysium,[22] and to lack her joy.

Even as poor birds, deceiv'd with painted grapes,
Do surfeit by the eye, and pine the maw,[23]
Even so she languisheth in her mishaps,
As those poor birds that helpless berries saw.[24]
The warm effects which she in him finds missing,
She seeks to kindle with continual kissing:

But all in vain; good queen, it will not be:
She hath assay'd as much as may be prov'd;
Her pleading hath deserv'd a greater fee;
She's love, she loves, and yet she is not lov'd.
Fie, fie! he says; you crush me; let me go:
You have no reason to withhold me so.

Thou hadst been gone, quoth she, sweet boy, ere this,
But that thou told'st me thou would'st hunt the boar.
O, be advis'd! thou know'st not what it is
With javelin's point a churlish swine to gore,
Whose tushes never-sheath'd he whetteth still,
Like to a mortal butcher, bent to kill.[25]

On his bow-back he hath a battle set
Of bristly pikes, that ever threat his foes;

[22] To *clip* was often used for to *embrace*. H.

[23] Alluding to the picture of Zeuxis, in which the grapes are said to have been represented so well that the birds mistook them for nature's own work. H.

[24] That is, berries that afford no help or nourishment

[25] *Mortal* was continually used for *deadly*. H

His eyes like glow-worms shine when he doth fret;
His snout digs sepulchres where'er he goes;
Being mov'd, he strikes whate'er is in his way,
And whom he strikes his cruel tushes slay.

His brawny sides, with hairy bristles arm'd,
Are better proof than thy spear's point can enter;
His short thick neck cannot be easily harm'd;
Being ireful, on the lion he will venture:
The thorny brambles and embracing bushes,
As fearful of him, part; through whom he rushes

Alas! he nought esteems that face of thine,
To which Love's eyes pay tributary gazes;
Nor thy soft hands, sweet lips, and crystal eyne,
Whose full perfection all the world amazes;
But, having thee at vantage, (wondrous dread!)
Would root these beauties as he roots the mead.

O, let him keep his loathsome cabin still!
Beauty hath nought to do with such foul fiends:
Come not within his danger by thy will;
They that thrive well take counsel of their friends.
When thou didst name the boar, not to dissemble,
I fear'd thy fortune, and my joints did tremble.

Didst thou not mark my face? Was it not white?
Saw'st thou not signs of fear lurk in mine eye?
Grew I not faint? and fell I not downright?
Within my bosom, whereon thou dost lie,
My boding heart pants, beats, and takes no rest,
But like an earthquake shakes thee on my breast.

For where Love reigns, disturbing Jealousy
Doth call himself Affection's sentinel;
Gives false alarms, suggesteth mutiny,
And in a peaceful hour doth cry, "Kill, kill!"

Distempering gentle love in his desire,
As air and water do abate the fire.

This sour informer, this bate-breeding spy,[26]
This canker that eats up love's tender spring,
This carry-tale, dissensious Jealousy,
That sometime true news, sometime false doth bring,
Knocks at my heart, and whispers in mine ear,
That, if I love thee, I thy death should fear;

And, more than so, presenteth to mine eye
The picture of an angry chafing boar,
Under whose sharp fangs on his back doth lie
An image like thyself, all stain'd with gore;
Whose blood, upon the fresh flowers being shed,
Doth make them droop with grief, and hang the head.

What should I do, seeing thee so indeed,
That tremble at th' imagination?
The thought of it doth make my faint heart bleed,
And fear doth teach it divination:
I prophesy thy death, my living sorrow,
If thou encounter with the boar to-morrow.

But, if thou needs wilt hunt, be rul'd by me;
Uncouple at the timorous flying hare;
Or at the fox, which lives by subtilty;
Or at the roe, which no encounter dare:
Pursue these fearful creatures o'er the downs,
And on thy well-breath'd horse keep with thy hounds.

And when thou hast on foot the purblind hare
Mark the poor wretch, to overshoot his troubles[27]

[26] *Bate* is an old word, signifying strife, contention.

[27] All the old editions have *overshuts*, which Steevens conjectured to be a misprint for *overshoots*, and Mr. Dyce adopts the latter word. But *overshut* may be used in the sense of *shut up* or *conclude*. To *get shut* of a thing is still in use for to *get rid* of it.

How he outruns the wind, and with what care
He cranks and crosses, with a thousand doubles:
The many musets through the which he goes,[28]
Are like a labyrinth to amaze his foes.

Sometime he runs among a flock of sheep,
To make the cunning hounds mistake their smell,
And sometime where earth-delving conies keep,
To stop the loud pursuers in their yell;
And sometime sorteth with a herd of deer:
Danger deviseth shifts, wit waits on fear.

For there his smell with others being mingled,
The hot scent-snuffing hounds are driven to doubt,
Ceasing their clamorous cry, till they have singled
With much ado the cold fault cleanly out:
Then do they spend their mouths; Echo replies,
As if another chase were in the skies.

By this, poor Wat, far off upon a hill,
Stands on his hinder legs with listening ear,
To hearken if his foes pursue him still:
Anon their loud alarums he doth hear;
And now his grief may be compared well
To one sore sick, that hears the passing-bell.

Then shalt thou see the dew-bedabbled wretch
Turn and return, indenting with the way:
Each envious brier his weary legs doth scratch;
Each shadow makes him stop, each murmur stay;
For misery is trodden on by many,
And, being low, never reliev'd by any.

Lie quietly, and hear a little more;
Nay, do not struggle, for thou shalt not rise.

[28] *Muset* is probably a diminutive of *muse*, which means a hole in a hedge, made by the passing of a hare. Cotgrave explains *trouee* "a gap or *muset* in a hedge." — *Cranks*, in the preceding line, is *bends* or *turns*; as in Hotspur's phrase, "this river comes me *cranking* in."

To make thee hate the hunting of the boar,
Unlike myself thou hear'st me moralize,
Applying this to that, and so to so;
For love can comment upon every woe.

Where did I leave? — No matter where, quoth he;
Leave me, and then the story aptly ends:
The night is spent. Why, what of that? quoth she.
I am, quoth he, expected of my friends;
And now 'tis dark, and going I shall fall.
In night, quoth she, desire sees best of all.

But if thou fall, O! then imagine this:
The earth, in love with thee, thy footing trips,
And all is but to rob thee of a kiss.
Rich preys make true men thieves; so do thy lips
Make modest Dian cloudy and forlorn,
Lest she should steal a kiss, and die forsworn.

Now, of this dark night I perceive the reason:
Cynthia for shame obscures her silver shine,
Till forging nature be condemn'd of treason,
For stealing moulds from heaven that were divine
Wherein she fram'd thee, in high heaven's despite,
To shame the sun by day, and her by night.

And therefore hath she brib'd the Destinies,
To cross the curious workmanship of nature;
To mingle beauty with infirmities,
And pure perfection with impure defeature;
Making it subject to the tyranny
Of mad mischances and much misery;

As burning fevers, agues pale and faint,
Life-poisoning pestilence, and frenzies wood;[29]

[29] *Wood* is an old word for *mad*. See A Midsummer-Night's Dream, Act ii. sc. 1, note 26. H.

The marrow-eating sickness, whose attraint
Disorder breeds by heating of the blood:
Surfeits, imposthumes, grief, and damn'd despair,
Swear nature's death for framing thee so fair.

And not the least of all these maladies
But in one minute's fight brings beauty under;
Both favour, savour, hue, and qualities,
Whereat th' impartial gazer late did wonder,
Are on the sudden wasted, thaw'd, and done,
As mountain snow melts with the mid-day sun.

Therefore, despite of fruitless chastity,
Love-lacking vestals, and self-loving nuns,
That on the earth would breed a scarcity,
And barren dearth of daughters and of sons,
Be prodigal: the lamp that burns by night
Dries up his oil, to lend the world his light.

What is thy body but a swallowing grave,
Seeming to bury that posterity
Which by the rights of time thou needs must have,
If thou destroy them not in dark obscurity?
If so, the world will hold thee in disdain,
Sith in thy pride so fair a hope is slain.

So in thyself thyself art made away;
A mischief worse than civil home-bred strife,
Or theirs whose desperate hands themselves do slay
Or butcher sire that reaves his son of life.
Foul cankering rust the hidden treasure frets;
But gold that's put to use, more gold begets.

Nay, then, quoth Adon, you will fall again
Into your idle over-handled theme:
The kiss I gave you is bestow'd in vain,
And all in vain you strive against the stream;

For by this black-fac'd night, desire's foul nurse,
Your treatise makes me like you worse and worse

If love have lent you twenty thousand tongues,
And every tongue more moving than your own,
Bewitching like the wanton mermaid's songs,
Yet from mine ear the tempting tune is blown:
For know, my heart stands armed in mine ear,
And will not let a false sound enter there;

Lest the deceiving harmony should run
Into the quiet closure of my breast;
And then my little heart were quite undone,
In his bed-chamber to be barr'd of rest.
No, lady, no; my heart longs not to groan,
But soundly sleeps, while now it sleeps alone.

What have you urg'd that I cannot reprove?
The path is smooth that leadeth on to danger:
I hate not love, but your device in love,
That lends embracements unto every stranger.
You do it for increase: O, strange excuse!
When reason is the bawd to lust's abuse.

Call it not love, for Love to heaven is fled,
Since sweating Lust on earth usurp'd his name,
Under whose simple semblance he hath fed
Upon fresh beauty, blotting it with blame;
Which the hot tyrant stains, and soon bereaves,
As caterpillars do the tender leaves.

Love comforteth like sunshine after rain,
But lust's effect is tempest after sun;
Love's gentle spring doth always fresh remain,
Lust's winter comes ere summer half be done;
Love surfeits not, lust like a glutton dies;
Love is all truth, lust full of forged lies.

More I could tell, but more I dare not say;
The text is old, the orator too green.
Therefore, in sadness, now I will away;
My face is full of shame, my heart of teen:[30]
Mine ears, that to your wanton talk attended,
Do burn themselves for having so offended.

With this, he breaketh from the sweet embrace
Of those fair arms which bound him to her breast,
And homeward through the dark lawn runs apace
Leaves Love upon her back deeply distress'd.
Look, how a bright star shooteth from the sky,
So glides he in the night from Venus' eye;

Which after him she darts, as one on shore
Gazing upon a late-embarked friend,
Till the wild waves will have him seen no more,
Whose ridges with the meeting clouds contend:
So did the merciless and pitchy night
Fold in the object that did feed her sight:

Whereat amaz'd, as one that unaware
Hath dropp'd a precious jewel in the flood,
Or 'stonish'd as night-wanderers often are,
Their light blown out in some mistrustful wood;
Even so confounded in the dark she lay,
Having lost the fair discovery of her way.

And now she beats her heart, whereat it groans,
That all the neighbour caves, as seeming troubled,
Make verbal repetition of her moans;
Passion on passion deeply is redoubled.
Ah me! she cries; and, twenty times, Woe, woe!
And twenty echoes twenty times cry so.

[30] *Teen* is an old word for *sorrow*. See Romeo and Juliet, Act i sc. 3, note 1. H.

She, marking them, begins a wailing note,
And sings extemporally a woeful ditty;
How love makes young men thrall, and old men dote:
How love is wise in folly, foolish-witty:
Her heavy anthem still concludes in woe,
And still the choir of echoes answer so.

Her song was tedious, and outwore the night,
For lovers' hours are long, though seeming short:
If pleas'd themselves, others, they think, delight
In such like circumstance, with such like sport:
Their copious stories, oftentimes begun,
End without audience, and are never done.

For whom hath she to spend the night withal,
But idle sounds resembling parasites,
Like shrill-tongued tapsters answering every call,
Soothing the humour of fantastic wits?
She says, 'Tis so; they answer all, 'Tis so;
And would say after her, if she said no.

Lo! here the gentle lark, weary of rest,
From his moist cabinet mounts up on high,
And wakes the morning, from whose silver breast
The sun ariseth in his majesty;
Who doth the world so gloriously behold,
That cedar-tops and hills seem burnish'd gold.

Venus salutes him with this fair good-morrow:
O, thou clear god, and patron of all light!
From whom each lamp and shining star doth borrow
The beauteous influence that makes him bright;
There lives a son, that suck'd an earthly mother
May lend thee light, as thou dost lend to other.

This said, she hasteth to a myrtle grove,
Musing the morning is so much o'erworn,

And yet she hears no tidings of her love;
She hearkens for his hounds and for his horn:
Anon she hears them chant it lustily,
And all in haste she coasteth to the cry.[31]

And as she runs, the bushes in the way,
Some catch her by the neck, some kiss her face,
Some twine about her thigh to make her stay:
She wildly breaketh from their strict embrace,
Like a milch doe, whose swelling dugs do ache
Hasting to feed her fawn, hid in some brake.

By this, she hears the hounds are at a bay,
Whereat she starts, like one that spies an adder
Wreath'd up in fatal folds, just in his way,
The fear whereof doth make him shake and shudder
Even so the timorous yelping of the hounds
Appals her senses, and her spirit confounds.

For now she knows it is no gentle chase,
But the blunt boar, rough bear, or lion proud;
Because the cry remaineth in one place,
Where fearfully the dogs exclaim aloud:
Finding their enemy to be so curst,[32]
They all strain courtesy who shall cope him first.

This dismal cry rings sadly in her ear,
Through which it enters to surprise her heart;
Who, overcome by doubt and bloodless fear,
With cold-pale weakness numbs each feeling part
Like soldiers, when their captain once doth yield,
They basely fly, and dare not stay the field.

Thus stands she in a trembling ecstasy,
Till, cheering up her senses all dismay'd,[33]

[31] To *coast* was used for a *sidelong approach* to a thing.
[32] *Curst* is *cross, snappish, fierce;* often so used in the plays.
H
[33] So the first two editions: that of 1596 has *sore* instead of *all*
Sore is commonly preferred, perhaps rightly so
B

She tells them, 'tis a causeless fantasy
And childish error, that they are afraid;
Bids them leave quaking, bids them fear no more:
And with that word she spied the hunted boar;

Whose frothy mouth, bepainted all with red,
Like milk and blood being mingled both together,
A second fear through all her sinews spread,
Which madly hurries her she knows not whither:
This way she runs, and now she will no further,
But back retires, to rate the boar for murther.

A thousand spleens bear her a thousand ways;
She treads the path that she untreads again:
Her more than haste is mated with delays,[34]
Like the proceedings of a drunken brain;
Full of respects,[35] yet nought at all respecting;
In hand with all things, nought at all effecting.

Here kennel'd in a brake she finds a hound,
And asks the weary caitiff for his master;
And there another licking of his wound,
'Gainst venom'd sores the only sovereign plaster;
And here she meets another sadly scowling,
To whom she speaks, and he replies with howling.

When he hath ceas'd his ill-resounding noise,
Another flap-mouth'd mourner, black and grim,
Against the welkin volleys out his voice;
Another and another answer him,
Clapping their proud tails to the ground below,
Shaking their scratch'd ears, bleeding as they go.

[34] *Mated* is *confounded* or *defeated*. The word is met with several times in the plays. See Macbeth, Act v. sc. 1, note 4. H.

[35] So the first two editions; the later, *respect*. *Respect* was often used thus for *consideration;* as in King Lear, Act i. sc. 1: "Love is not love, when it is mingled with *respects* that stand aloof from the entire point." H

Look, how the world's poor people are amaz'd
At apparitions, signs, and prodigies,
Whereon with fearful eyes they long have gaz'd,
Infusing them with dreadful prophecies;
So she at these sad signs draws up her breath,
And, sighing it again, exclaims on Death:

Hard-favour'd tyrant, ugly, meagre, lean,
Hateful divorce of love, (thus chides she Death,)
Grim-grinning ghost, earth's worm, what dost thou mean,
To stifle beauty, and to steal his breath,
Who when he liv'd, his breath and beauty set
Gloss on the rose, smell to the violet?

If he be dead, — O no! it cannot be,
Seeing his beauty, thou shouldst strike at it. —
O yes! it may; thou hast no eyes to see,
But hatefully at random dost thou hit.
Thy mark is feeble age; but thy false dart
Mistakes that aim, and cleaves an infant's heart.

Hadst thou but bid beware, then he had spoke,
And, hearing him, thy power had lost his power.
The Destinies will curse thee for this stroke;
They bid thee crop a weed, thou pluck'st a flower:
Love's golden arrow at him should have fled,
And not death's ebon dart, to strike him dead.

Dost thou drink tears, that thou provok'st such weeping?
What may a heavy groan advantage thee?
Why hast thou cast into eternal sleeping
Those eyes that taught all other eyes to see?
Now Nature cares not for thy mortal vigour,[36]
Since her best work is ruin'd with thy rigour.

[36] *Mortal* again in the sense of *deadly*. See note 25. H.

Here overcome, as one full of despair,
She vail'd her eye-lids,[37] who, like sluices, stopp'd
The crystal tide that from her two cheeks fair
In the sweet channel of her bosom dropp'd;
But through the flood-gates breaks the silver rain,
And with his strong course opens them again.

O, how her eyes and tears did lend and borrow!
Her eyes seen in the tears, tears in her eye;
Both crystals, where they view'd each other's sorrow;
Sorrow, that friendly sighs sought still to dry;
But, like a stormy day, now wind, now rain,
Sighs dry her cheeks, tears make them wet again.

Variable passions throng her constant woe,
As striving who should best become her grief;
All entertain'd, each passion labours so,
That every present sorrow seemeth chief,
But none is best; then join they all together,
Like many clouds consulting for foul weather.

By this, far off she hears some huntsman hollow,
A nurse's song ne'er pleas'd her babe so well:
The dire imagination she did follow,
This sound of hope doth labour to expel;
For now reviving joy bids her rejoice,
And flatters her it is Adonis' voice:

Whereat her tears began to turn their tide,
Being prison'd in her eye, like pearls in glass;
Yet sometimes falls an orient drop beside,
Which her cheek melts, as scorning it should pass,
To wash the foul face of the sluttish ground,
Who is but drunken, when she seemeth drown'd.

O, hard-believing love, how strange it seems
Not to believe, and yet too credulous!

[37] That is, *let fall* her eye-lids. See note 13. H.

Thy weal and woe are both of them extremes;
Despair and hope make thee ridiculous:
The one doth flatter thee in thoughts unlikely,
In likely thoughts the other kills thee quickly.

Now she unweaves the web that she hath wrought
Adonis lives, and Death is not to blame:
It was not she that call'd him all to nought;
Now she adds honours to his hateful name;
She clepes him king of graves,[38] and grave for kings,
Imperious supreme of all mortal things.

No, no, quoth she, sweet Death, I did but jest;
Yet, pardon me, I felt a kind of fear,
When as I met the boar, that bloody beast,
Which knows no pity, but is still severe;
Then, gentle shadow, (truth I must confess,)
I rail'd on thee, fearing my love's decease.

'Tis not my fault; the boar provok'd my tongue:
Be wreak'd on him, invisible commander:
'Tis he, foul creature, that hath done thee wrong;
I did but act, he's author of thy slander.
Grief hath two tongues, and never woman yet
Could rule them both, without ten women's wit.

Thus, hoping that Adonis is alive,
Her rash suspect she doth extenuate;
And, that his beauty may the better thrive,
With Death she humbly doth insinuate;
Tells him of trophies, statues, tombs; and stories
His victories, his triumphs, and his glories.

O Jove! quoth she, how much a fool was I,
To be of such a weak and silly mind,

[38] *Clepes* for *calls;* often so used. See Macbeth, Act iii. sc. 1, note 6. H.

To wail his death, who lives, and must not die,
Till mutual overthrow of mortal kind;
For, he being dead, with him is beauty slain,
And, beauty dead, black chaos comes again.

Fie, fie, fond Love! thou art so full of fear,
As one with treasure laden, hemm'd with thieves;
Trifles, unwitnessed with eye or ear,
Thy coward heart with false bethinking grieves.
Even at this word she hears a merry horn,
Whereat she leaps, that was but late forlorn.

As falcon to the lure, away she flies:
The grass stoops not, she treads on it so light;
And in her haste unfortunately spies
The foul boar's conquest on her fair delight:
Which seen, her eyes, as murder'd with the view,
Like stars asham'd of day, themselves withdrew

Or, as the snail, whose tender horns being hit,
Shrinks backward in his shelly cave with pain,
And there all smother'd up in shade doth sit,
Long after fearing to creep forth again;
So, at his bloody view, her eyes are fled
Into the deep dark cabins of her head;

Where they resign their office and their light
To the disposing of her troubled brain;
Who bids them still consort with ugly night,
And never wound the heart with looks again;
Who, like a king perplexed in his throne,
By their suggestion gives a deadly groan;

Whereat each tributary subject quakes;
As when the wind, imprison'd in the ground,
Struggling for passage, earth's foundation shakes,
Which with cold terror doth men's minds confound

This mutiny each part doth so surprise.
That from their dark beds once more leap her eyes,

And, being open'd, threw unwilling light
Upon the wide wound that the boar had trench'd
In his soft flank; whose wonted lily white
With purple tears, that his wound wept, was drench'd
No flower was nigh, no grass, herb, leaf, or weed,
But stole his blood, and seem'd with him to bleed.

This solemn sympathy poor Venus noteth;
Over one shoulder doth she hang her head;
Dumbly she passions,[39] franticly she doteth;
She thinks he could not die, he is not dead:
Her voice is stopp'd, her joints forget to bow;
Her eyes are mad that they have wept till now.

Upon his hurt she looks so steadfastly,
That her sight dazzling makes the wound seem three;
And then she reprehends her mangling eye,
That makes more gashes where no breach should be:
His face seems twain, each several limb is doubled;
For oft the eye mistakes, the brain being troubled.

My tongue cannot express my grief for one,
And yet, quoth she, behold two Adons dead!
My sighs are blown away, my salt tears gone,
Mine eyes are turn'd to fire, my heart to lead:
Heavy heart's lead, melt at mine eyes' red fire!
So shall I die by drops of hot desire.

Alas, poor world, what treasure hast thou lost!
What face remains alive that's worth the viewing?
Whose tongue is music now? what canst thou boast
Of things long since, or any thing ensuing?

[39] We have before met with *passion* used as a verb. See The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Act iv. sc. 4, note 6. H.

The flowers are sweet, their colours fresh and trim;
But true sweet beauty liv'd and died with him.

Bonnet nor veil henceforth no creature wear!
Nor sun nor wind will ever strive to kiss you:
Having no fair to lose,[40] you need not fear;
The sun doth scorn you, and the wind doth hiss you:
But, when Adonis liv'd, sun and sharp air
Lurk'd like two thieves, to rob him of his fair;

And therefore would he put his bonnet on,
Under whose brim the gaudy sun would peep;
The wind would blow it off, and, being gone,
Play with his locks: then would Adonis weep;
And straight, in pity of his tender years,
They both would strive who first should dry his tears.

To see his face, the lion walk'd along
Behind some hedge, because he would not fear him;[41]
To recreate himself when he hath sung,
The tiger would be tame, and gently hear him;
If he had spoke, the wolf would leave his prey,
And never fright the silly lamb that day.

When he beheld his shadow in the brook,
The fishes spread on it their golden gills;
When he was by, the birds such pleasure took,
That some would sing, some other in their bills
Would bring him mulberries and ripe-red cherries;
He fed them with his sight, they him with berries.

[40] *Fair* is here used as a substantive for *beauty*. See The Comedy of Errors, Act ii. sc. 1, note 10. H.

[41] *Fear* used as a transitive verb, for to *make afraid;* as in Measure for Measure, Act ii. sc. 1: "We must not make a scarecrow of the law, setting it up to *fear* the birds of prey." H.

But this foul, grim, and urchin-snouted boar,[42]
Whose downward eye still looketh for a grave,
Ne'er saw the beauteous livery that he wore;
Witness the entertainment that he gave:
If he did see his face, why, then, I know,
He thought to kiss him, and hath kill'd him so.

'Tis true, 'tis true; thus was Adonis slain:
He ran upon the boar with his sharp spear,
Who did not whet his teeth at him again,
But by a kiss thought to persuade him there;
And, nuzzling in his flank, the loving swine
Sheath'd, unaware, the tusk in his soft groin.

Had I been tooth'd like him, I must confess,
With kissing him I should have kill'd him first;
But he is dead, and never did he bless
My youth with his; the more am I accurs'd.
With this she falleth in the place she stood,
And stains her face with his congealed blood.

She looks upon his lips, and they are pale;
She takes him by the hand, and that is cold;
She whispers in his ears a heavy tale,
As if they heard the woeful words she told;
She lifts the coffer-lids that close his eyes,
Where, lo! two lamps, burnt out, in darkness lies

Two glasses, where herself herself beheld
A thousand times, and now no more reflect;
Their virtue lost, wherein they late excell'd,
And every beauty robb'd of his effect.
Wonder of time, quoth she, this is my spite,
That, thou being dead, the day should yet be light

Since thou art dead, lo! here I prophesy,
Sorrow on love hereafter shall attend;

[42] That is, snouted like a hedgehog.

It shall be waited on with jealousy,
Find sweet beginning, but unsavory end;
Ne'er settled equally, but high or low,
That all love's pleasure shall not match his woe

It shall be fickle, false, and full of fraud;
Bud and be blasted in a breathing-while;
The bottom poison, and the top o'erstraw'd
With sweets, that shall the truest sight beguile:
The strongest body shall it make most weak,
Strike the wise dumb, and teach the fool to speak

It shall be sparing, and too full of riot,
Teaching decrepit age to tread the measures;[43]
The staring ruffian shall it keep in quiet,
Pluck down the rich, enrich the poor with treasures:
It shall be raging-mad, and silly-mild;
Make the young old, the old become a child.

It shall suspect, where is no cause of fear;
It shall not fear, where it should most mistrust;
It shall be merciful, and too severe;
And most deceiving, when it seems most just:
Perverse it shall be, where it shows most toward;
Put fear to valour, courage to the coward.

It shall be cause of war and dire events,
And set dissension 'twixt the son and sire;
Subject and servile to all discontents,
As dry combustious matter is to fire:
Sith in his prime death doth my love destroy,
They that love best their loves shall not enjoy.

By this the boy, that by her side lay kill'd,
Was melted like a vapour from her sight;

[43] A *measure* was a slow and stately dance. See Much Ado about Nothing, Act ii. sc. 1, note 2.

And in his blood, that on the ground lay spill'd,
A purple flower sprung up, chequer'd with white,
Resembling well his pale cheeks, and the blood
Which in round drops upon their whiteness stood.

She bows her head, the new-sprung flower to smell,
Comparing it to her Adonis' breath;
And says, within her bosom it shall dwell,
Since he himself is reft from her by death:
She crops the stalk, and in the breach appears
Green dropping sap, which she compares to tears.

Poor flower! quoth she, this was thy father's guise,
(Sweet issue of a more sweet-smelling sire,)
For every little grief to wet his eyes:
To grow unto himself was his desire,
And so 'tis thine; but know, it is as good
To wither in my breast, as in his blood.

Here was thy father's bed, here in my breast;
Thou art the next of blood, and 'tis thy right:
Lo! in this hollow cradle take thy rest;
My throbbing heart shall rock thee day and night:
There shall not be one minute in an hour,
Wherein I will not kiss my sweet love's flower.

Thus, weary of the world, away she hies,
And yokes her silver doves; by whose swift aid,
Their mistress mounted, through the empty skies
In her light chariot quickly is convey'd;
Holding their course to Paphos, where their queen
Means to immure herself, and not be seen.

INTRODUCTION

TO

THE RAPE OF LUCRECE.

"A BOOK entitled The Ravishment of Lucrece" is the reading of an entry at the Stationers', by "Mr. Harrison, senior," on the 9th of May, 1594. The same year was issued a quarto pamphlet of forty-seven leaves, with the following title-page: "Lucrece. London: Printed by Richard Field for John Harrison, and are to be sold at the sign of the white Greyhound in Paul's Church-yard. 1594." The poem was reissued by the same publisher, in 1598, 1600, and 1607. Malone claims to have heard of editions in 1596 and 1602; he was probably misinformed, as no copies with those dates have been discovered.

In his dedication of this poem to the Earl of Southampton, the author speaks in a more confident tone than in that of the Venus and Adonis, as if his growth of reputation during the interval had given him a feeling of strength with his noble friend and patron. The language, too, of the dedication is such as to infer, that he had in the mean time tasted more largely of that nobleman's bounty.

The Rape of Lucrece was not commended so much as its predecessor during the Poet's life, but it received commendation from higher sources, and in a higher style. A strong instance from Gabriel Harvey has been quoted in our Introduction to Hamlet, and therefore need not be given here.

Lucretia the Chaste is a theme of frequent recurrence in the romantic literature of the middle ages, when knighthood and chivalry were wont to feed themselves on the glory of her example. The story was accessible to Shakespeare in Chaucer and Lydgate, and in Paynter's Palace of Pleasure: there were also several ballads on the subject. As to the classical sources of the tale, it is not likely that the Poet was beholden directly to any of them, except, perhaps, the *Fasti*, of which an English version appeared in 1570.

Modern criticism generally, assigns The Rape of Lucrece a place of merit considerably below that of the Venus and Adonis. The thought and passion of the later poem were, from the nature of the subject, of a much severer order, and probably did not admit of the warmth and vividness of colouring and imagery which

so distinguish the earlier; though there is in both a certain incontinence of wit and fancy, which shows that impulse was at that time stronger with the Poet than art. The truth seems to be, that both are too highly seasoned with the peculiar spicery of the time to carry an abiding relish. Their shape and physiognomy express rather the literary fashion of the age, than the Poet's mental character; and what was then apt to be regarded as the crowning witchcraft of poetry, has the effect now of studied and elaborate coldness; the real glow of the work being drowned and lost to us in a profuse and redundant sparkling of conceit.

In Bell's edition of the English Poets, now publishing, the comparative merit of the two poems is discussed as follows: "Opinion is divided in the choice between Venus and Adonis and The Rape of Lucrece. Malone pronounces decidedly against the latter,—a decision which greatly surprises Boswell. The majority of readers will be likely to agree with Malone. The subject of the former piece is, at least, less painful, and its treatment is more compact and effective. In beauty of expression and passionate depth of feeling, the Venus and Adonis transcends the Lucrece, upon which more elaboration has been bestowed with less success. The interest of Lucrece suffers from attenuation. The agony is too protracted; the horror of the main incident is exhausted by prolonged augmentation; and the close is abrupt and hurried. There is a want of symmetry in the parts; and the catastrophe is not presented with the fulness and solemnity proportionate to the expectations excited by the preparatory details. But the poem abounds in sweet and noble passages; and in both pieces we discover the germs of that unerring genius which impressed the true image of nature upon every scene and character it depicted."

A passage from Coleridge will best dismiss the subject: "No man was ever yet a great poet, without being at the same time a profound philosopher. For poetry is the blossom and fragrancy of all human knowledge, human thoughts, human passions, emotions, language. In Shakespeare's *poems*, the creative power and the intellectual energy wrestle as in a war embrace. Each in its excess of strength seems to threaten the extinction of the other. At length, in the *drama* they were reconciled, and fought each with its shield before the breast of the other. The Venus and Adonis did not, perhaps, allow the display of the deeper passions. But the story of Lucretia seems to favour, and even demand their intensest workings. Yet we find in Shakespeare's management of the tale neither pathos, nor any other *dramatic* quality. There is the same minute and faithful imagery as in the former poem, in the same vivid colours, inspirited by the same impetuous vigour of thought, and diverging and contracting with the same activity of the assimulative and of the modifying faculties; and with a yet larger display, a yet wider range of knowledge and reflection; and, lastly, with the same perfect dominion, often *domination*, over the whole world of language."

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

HENRY WRIOTHESLY,

EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON, AND BARON OF TICHFIELD.

THE love I dedicate to your Lordship is without end whereof this pamphlet, without beginning, is but a superfluous moiety.[1] The warrant I have of your honourable disposition, not the worth of my untutored lines, makes it assured of acceptance. What I have done is yours, what I have to do is yours; being part in all I have, devoted yours. Were my worth greater, my duty would show greater: meantime, as it is, it is bound to your Lordship, to whom I wish long life, still lengthened with happiness

Your Lordship's in all duty,

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

[1] In Shakespeare's time, *moiety* was used indifferently for any part of a thing, whether the half, or more or less than half. The plays furnish several instances in point. See 1 Henry IV., Act iii sc. 1, note 6; and King Lear, Act i. sc. 1, note 1. H.

THE RAPE OF LUCRECE.

THE ARGUMENT.[2]

Lucius Tarquinius, (for his excessive pride surnamed Superbus,) after he had caused his own father-in-law, Servius Tullius, to be cruelly murdered, and, contrary to the Roman laws and customs, not requiring or staying for the people's suffrages, had possessed himself of the kingdom, went, accompanied with his sons and other noblemen of Rome, to besiege Ardea: during which siege, the principal men of the army meeting one evening at the tent of Sextus Tarquinius, the king's son, in their discourses after supper every one commended the virtues of his own wife; among whom, Collatinus extolled the incomparable chastity of his wife Lucretia. In that pleasant humour they all posted to Rome; and, intending by their secret and sudden arrival to make trial of that which every one had before avouched, only Collatinus finds his wife, though it were late in the night, spinning amongst her maids: the other ladies were all found dancing and revelling, or in several disports; whereupon the noblemen yielded Collatinus the victory, and his wife the fame. At that time Sextus Tarquinius, being inflamed with Lucrece' beauty, yet smothering his passions for the present, departed with the rest back to the camp; from whence he shortly after privily withdrew himself, and was, according to his estate royally entertained and lodged by Lucrece at Collatium.

[2] This argument is presumed to have been written by the Poet himself, and it was prefixed to the edition of 1594. Besides that it narrates the story with clearness and simplicity, it has the further interest of being the only prose composition of Shakespeare, not dramatic, known to exist, except the two dedications to Southampton. H.

The same night, he treacherously stealeth into her chamber, violently ravished her, and early in the morning speedeth away. Lucrece, in this lamentable plight, hastily despatcheth messengers, one to Rome for her father, another to the camp for Collatine. They came, the one accompanied with Junius Brutus, the other with Publius Valerius; and, finding Lucrece attired in mourning habit, demanded the cause of her sorrow. She, first taking an oath of them for her revenge, revealed the actor, and whole manner of his dealing, and withal suddenly stabbed herself: which done, with one consent they all vowed to root out the whole hated family of the Tarquins; and, bearing the dead body to Rome, Brutus acquainted the people with the doer and manner of the vile deed, with a bitter invective against the tyranny of the king; wherewith the people were so moved, that, with one consent and a general acclamation, the Tarquins were all exiled, and the state government changed from kings to consuls.

From the besieged Ardea all in post,
Borne by the trustless wings of false desire,
Lust-breathed Tarquin leaves the Roman host,
And to Collatium bears the lightless fire,
Which, in pale embers hid, lurks to aspire,
And girdle with embracing flames the waist
Of Collatine's fair love, Lucrece the chaste.

Haply, that name of chaste unhappily set
This bateless edge on his keen appetite;
When Collatine unwisely did not let[1]
To praise the clear unmatched red and white,
Which triumph'd in that sky of his delight;
Where mortal stars, as bright as heaven's beauties,
With pure aspects did him peculiar duties.

[1] The proper meaning of *let*, as we have often seen in the plays, was to *hinder* or *prevent*. Here it seems to be used reflexively; that is, did not let or hinder *himself*; or, did not *forbear*. H.

For he the night before, in Tarquin's tent,
Unlock'd the treasure of his happy state;
What priceless wealth the heavens had him lent
In the possession of his beauteous mate;
Reckoning his fortune at such high proud rate,
That kings might be espoused to more fame,
But king nor peer to such a peerless dame.

O, happiness enjoy'd but of a few!
And, if possess'd, as soon decay'd and done
As is the morning's silver-melting dew
Against the golden splendour of the sun!
An expir'd date, cancell'd ere well begun!
Honour and beauty, in the owner's arms,
Are weakly fortress'd from a world of harms.

Beauty itself doth of itself persuade
The eyes of men without an orator:
What needeth, then, apologies be made
To set forth that which is so singular?
Or why is Collatine the publisher
Of that rich jewel he should keep unknown
From thievish ears, because it is his own?

Perchance, his boast of Lucrece' sovereignty
Suggested this proud issue of a king;[2]
For by our ears our hearts oft tainted be:
Perchance, that envy of so rich a thing,
Braving compare, disdainfully did sting
His high-pitch'd thoughts, that meaner men should vaunt
That golden hap which their superiors want.

But some untimely thought did instigate
His all too timeless speed, if none of those:

[2] *Suggest* was continually used for *tempt* or *instigate*. The plays have many examples of the kind. See The Tempest, Act iv. sc. 1, note 3. H.

His honour, his affairs, his friends, his state
Neglected all, with swift intent he goes
To quench the coal which in his liver glows.[3]
O, rash, false heat! wrapp'd in repentant cold,
Thy hasty spring still blasts, and ne'er grows old

When at Collatium this false lord arriv'd,
Well was he welcom'd by the Roman dame,
Within whose face beauty and virtue striv'd
Which of them both should underprop her fame
When virtue bragg'd, beauty would blush for shame;
When beauty boasted blushes, in despite
Virtue would stain that o'er with silver white.[4]

But beauty, in that white intituled,[5]
From Venus' doves doth challenge that fair field;
Then virtue claims from beauty beauty's red,
Which virtue gave the golden age, to gild
Their silver cheeks, and call'd it then their shield;
Teaching them thus to use it in the fight; —
When shame assail'd, the red should fence the white.

This heraldry in Lucrece' face was seen,
Argued by beauty's red and virtue's white:
Of either's colour was the other queen,
Proving from world's minority their right;
Yet their ambition makes them still to fight,
The sovereignty of either being so great,
That oft they interchange each other's seat.

[3] The liver was anciently supposed to be the seat of certain passions. See The Tempest, Act iv. sc. 1, note 5. H.

[4] The first edition has *ore;* the later ones, *o'er*. *Ore* was a common way of printing *o'er*. Some editors, however, retain *ore* here, and explain it to mean gold, in which sense it was often used See Hamlet, Act iv. sc. 1, note 4. H.

[5] That is, which consists in that whiteness, or takes its title from it

This silent war of lilies and of roses,
Which Tarquin view'd in her fair face's field,
In their pure ranks his traitor eye encloses;
Where, lest between them both it should be kill'd,
The coward captive vanquished doth yield
To those two armies, that would let him go,
Rather than triumph in so false a foe.

Now thinks he, that her husband's shallow tongue,
The niggard prodigal that prais'd her so,
In that high task hath done her beauty wrong,
Which far exceeds his barren skill to show:
Therefore, that praise which Collatine doth owe,[6]
Enchanted Tarquin answers with surmise,
In silent wonder of still-gazing eyes.

This earthly saint, adored by this devil,
Little suspecteth the false worshipper,
For unstain'd thoughts do seldom dream on evil;
Birds never lim'd no secret bushes fear:
So, guiltless, she securely gives good cheer
And reverend welcome to her princely guest,
Whose inward ill no outward harm express'd:

For that he colour'd with his high estate,
Hiding base sin in plaits of majesty;
That nothing in him seem'd inordinate,
Save sometime too much wonder of his eye,
Which, having all, all could not satisfy;
But, poorly rich, so wanteth in his store,
That, cloy'd with much, he pineth still for more.

But she, that never cop'd with stranger eyes,
Could pick no meaning from their parling looks,
Nor read the subtle-shining secrecies

[6] *Praise* here signifies the object of praise, that is, Lucretia. — *Owe* for *own* or *possess*

Writ in the glassy margents of such books:[7]
She touch'd no unknown baits, nor fear'd no hooks
Nor could she moralize his wanton sight,[8]
More than his eyes were open'd to the light.

He stories to her ears her husband's fame,
Won in the fields of fruitful Italy;
And decks with praises Collatine's high name,
Made glorious by his manly chivalry,
With bruised arms, and wreaths of victory:
Her joy with heav'd-up hand she doth express,
And, wordless, so greets Heaven for his success.

Far from the purpose of his coming thither,
He makes excuses for his being there:
No cloudy show of stormy blustering weather
Doth yet in his fair welkin once appear;
Till sable Night, mother of dread and fear,
Upon the world dim darkness doth display,
And in her vaulty prison stows the day:

For then is Tarquin brought unto his bed,
Intending weariness with heavy sprite;[9]
For, after supper, long he questioned
With modest Lucrece, and wore out the night.
Now leaden slumber with life's strength doth fight,
And every one to rest themselves betake,[10]
Save thieves, and cares, and troubled minds, that wake.

[7] Alluding to the custom of printing comments on books in the margin. See Hamlet, Act v. sc. 2, note 23. H.

[8] *Moralize* is here used in the sense of *interpret*. See The Taming of the Shrew, Act iv. sc. 4. H.

[9] *Intending* for *pretending; questioned* for *conversed*. See King Richard III., Act iii. sc. 5, note 1. H.

[10] Some copies of the first edition have *himself betakes*, and, in the next line, *wakes* instead of *wake*. Mr. Collier tells us that the copies of 1594 belonging to the Duke of Devonshire and the

As one of which, doth Tarquin lie revolving
The sundry dangers of his will's obtaining;
Yet ever to obtain his will resolving,
Though weak-built hopes persuade him to abstaining:
Despair to gain doth traffic oft for gaining;
And when great treasure is the meed propos'd,
Though death be adjunct, there's no death suppos'd.

Those that much covet are with gain so fond,
That what they have not, that which they possess,
They scatter and unloose it from their bond,
And so, by hoping more, they have but less;
Or, gaining more, the profit of excess
Is but to surfeit, and such griefs sustain,
That they prove bankrupt in this poor-rich gain.

The aim of all is but to nurse the life
With honour, wealth, and ease, in waning age;
And in this aim there is such thwarting strife,
That one for all, or all for one we gage;
As life for honour in fell battle's rage;
Honour for wealth; and oft that wealth doth cost
The death of all, and all together lost.

So that, in venturing ill, we leave to be
The things we are, for that which we expect;
And this ambitious foul infirmity,
In having much, torments us with defect
Of that we have: so then we do neglect
The thing we have, and, all for want of wit,
Make something nothing by augmenting it.

Such hazard now must doting Tarquin make,
Pawning his honour to obtain his lust;

late Mr. Caldecott read as in the text. Of course the explanation is, that the changes were made while the edition was in press.

And for himself himself he must forsake:
Then, where is truth, if there be no self-trust?
When shall he think to find a stranger just,
When he himself himself confounds, betrays
To slanderous tongues, and wretched hateful days?

Now stole upon the time the dead of night,
When heavy sleep had clos'd up mortal eyes;
No comfortable star did lend his light,
No noise but owls' and wolves' death-boding cries:
Now serves the season that they may surprise
The silly lambs. Pure thoughts are dead and still,
While Lust and Murder wake to stain and kill.

And now this lustful lord leap'd from his bed,
Throwing his mantle rudely o'er his arm;
Is madly toss'd between desire and dread;
Th' one sweetly flatters, th' other feareth harm:
But honest fear, bewitch'd with lust's foul charm
Doth too, too oft betake him to retire,
Beaten away by brain-sick rude desire.

His falchion on a flint he softly smiteth,
That from the cold stone sparks of fire do fly;
Whereat a waxen torch forthwith he lighteth,
Which must be load-star to his lustful eye;
And to the flame thus speaks advisedly:
As from this cold flint I enforc'd this fire,
So Lucrece must I force to my desire.

Here, pale with fear, he doth premeditate
The dangers of his loathsome enterprise,
And in his inward mind he doth debate
What following sorrow may on this arise;
Then, looking scornfully, he doth despise
His naked armour of still-slaughter'd lust,
And justly thus controls his thoughts unjust

Fair torch, burn out thy light, and lend it not
To darken her whose light excelleth thine;
And die, unhallow'd thoughts, before you blot
With your uncleanness that which is divine:
Offer pure incense to so pure a shrine:
Let fair humanity abhor the deed
That spots and stains love's modest snow-white weed.

O, shame to knighthood, and to shining arms!
O, foul dishonour to my household's grave!
O, impious act, including all foul harms!
A martial man to be soft fancy's slave!
True valour still a true respect should have;
Then my digression is so vile, so base,
That it will live engraven in my face.

Yea, though I die, the scandal will survive,
And be an eye-sore in my golden coat;
Some loathsome dash the herald will contrive,
To cipher me how fondly I did dote;
That my posterity, sham'd with the note,
Shall curse my bones, and hold it for no sin
To wish that I their father had not been.

What win I, if I gain the thing I seek?
A dream, a breath, a froth of fleeting joy.
Who buys a minute's mirth, to wail a week?
Or sells eternity, to get a toy?
For one sweet grape who will the vine destroy?
Or what fond beggar, but to touch the crown,
Would with the sceptre straight be stricken down?

If Collatinus dream of my intent,
Will he not wake, and in a desperate rage
Post hither, this vile purpose to prevent?
This siege that hath engirt his marriage,
This blur to youth, this sorrow to the sage,

'This dying virtue, this surviving shame,
Whose crime will bear an ever-during blame?
O! what excuse can my invention make,
When thou shalt charge me with so black a deed?
Will not my tongue be mute, my frail joints shake,
Mine eyes forego their light, my false heart bleed?
The guilt being great, the fear doth still exceed
And extreme fear can neither fight nor fly,
But, coward-like, with trembling terror die.

Had Collatinus kill'd my son or sire,
Or lain in ambush to betray my life,
Or were he not my dear friend, this desire
Might have excuse to work upon his wife,
As in revenge or quittal of such strife;
But as he is my kinsman, my dear friend,
The shame and fault finds no excuse nor end.

Shameful it is;—ay, if the fact be known:
Hateful it is;—there is no hate in loving:
I'll beg her love;—but she is not her own:
The worst is but denial, and reproving.
My will is strong, past reason's weak removing.
Who fears a sentence or an old man's saw,
Shall by a painted cloth be kept in awe.[11]

Thus, graceless, holds he disputation
'Tween frozen conscience and hot-burning will,
And with good thoughts makes dispensation,
Urging the worser sense for vantage still;
Which in a moment doth confound and kill
All pure effects, and doth so far proceed,
That what is vile shows like a virtuous deed.

[11] In the old tapestries, or painted cloths, moral sentences were usually wrought. See As You Like It, Act iii. sc. 2, note 28

Quoth he, She took me kindly by the hand,
And gaz'd for tidings in my eager eyes,
Fearing some hard news from the warlike band,
Where her beloved Collatinus lies.
O, how her fear did make her colour rise!
First red as roses that on lawn we lay,
Then white as lawn, the roses took away.

And how her hand, in my hand being lock'd,
Forc'd it to tremble with her loyal fear!
Which struck her sad, and then it faster rock'd,
Until her husband's welfare she did hear;
Whereat she smiled with so sweet a cheer,
That had Narcissus seen her as she stood,
Self-love had never drown'd him in the flood.

Why hunt I, then, for colour or excuses?
All orators are dumb when beauty pleadeth:
Poor wretches have remorse in poor abuses;
Love thrives not in the heart that shadows dreadeth:
Affection is my captain, and he leadeth;
And when his gaudy banner is display'd,
The coward fights, and will not be dismay'd.

Then, childish fear, avaunt! debating, die!
Respect[12] and reason, wait on wrinkled age!
My heart shall never countermand mine eye:
Sad pause and deep regard beseem the sage;
My part is youth, and beats these from the stage.
Desire my pilot is, beauty my prize;
Then, who fears sinking where such treasure lies?

As corn o'ergrown by weeds, so heedful fear
Is almost chok'd by unresisted lust.

[12] *Respect* here means *consideration*. See Venus and Adonis, note 35 E.

Away he steels with open listening ear,
Full of foul hope, and full of fond mistrust;
Both which, as servitors to the unjust,
So cross him with their opposite persuasion,
That now he vows a league, and now invasion.

Within his thought her heavenly image sits,
And in the selfsame seat sits Collatine:
That eye which looks on her confounds his wits;
That eye which him beholds, as more divine,
Unto a view so false will not incline;
But with a pure appeal seeks to the heart,
Which, once corrupted, takes the worser part;

And therein heartens up his servile powers,
Who, flatter'd by their leader's jocund show,
Stuff up his lust, as minutes fill up hours;
And as their captain, so their pride doth grow
Paying more slavish tribute than they owe.
By reprobate desire thus madly led,
The Roman lord marcheth to Lucrece' bed.

The locks between her chamber and his will,
Each one, by him enforc'd, retires his ward;[13]
But, as they open, they all rate his ill,
Which drives the creeping thief to some regard.
The threshold grates the door to have him heard;
Night-wandering weasels shriek to see him there;
They fright him, yet he still pursues his fear.

As each unwilling portal yields him way,
Through little vents and crannies of the place
The wind wars with his torch, to make him stay,
And blows the smoke of it into his face,
Extinguishing his conduct in this case;[14]

[13] *Retires* is here used as a transitive verb, *ward* being its object; so that the sense is the same as *withdraws*. — *His* for *its*. H.

[14] *Conduct* for *conductor*

But his hot heart, which fond desire doth scorch,
Puffs forth another wind that fires the torch:

And, being lighted, by the light he spies
Lucretia's glove, wherein her needle sticks:
He takes it from the rushes where it lies,[15]
And griping it, the neeld his finger pricks;
As who should say, this glove to wanton tricks
Is not inur'd; return again in haste:
Thou seest our mistress' ornaments are chaste.

But all these poor forbiddings could not stay him;
He in the worst sense construes their denial:
The doors, the wind, the glove, that did delay him
He takes for accidental things of trial,
Or as those bars which stop the hourly dial;
Who with a lingering stay his course doth let,
Till every minute pays the hour his debt.

So, so, quoth he; these lets attend the time,
Like little frosts that sometime threat the spring,
To add a more rejoicing to the prime,
And give the sneaped birds more cause to sing.[17]
Pain pays the income of each precious thing:
Huge rocks, high winds, strong pirates, shelves and sands,
The merchant fears, ere rich at home he lands.

Now is he come unto the chamber-door,
That shuts him from the heaven of his thought;

[15] Apartments in England were strewed with rushes in the time of our author.

[16] *Needle* was sometimes used as a monosyllable. See A Midsummer-Night's Dream, Act iii. sc. 2, note 16. H.

[17] *Sneaped* probably means *checked*. In 2 Henry IV., Act ii sc. 1, Falstaff, when reproved by the Chief Justice, replies,—"My lord, I will not undergo this *sneap* without reply." H

Which with a yielding latch, and with no more,
Hath barr'd him from the blessed thing he sought
So from himself impiety hath wrought,
That for his prey to pray he doth begin,
As if the heavens should countenance his sin.

But in the midst of his unfruitful prayer,
Having solicited th' eternal Power
That his foul thoughts might compass his fair fair,
And they would stand auspicious to the hour;
Even there he starts:—quoth he, I must deflower:
The powers to whom I pray abhor this fact;
How can they, then, assist me in the act?

Then Love and Fortune be my gods, my guide!
My will is back'd with resolution:
Thoughts are but dreams till their effects be tried;
The blackest sin is clear'd with absolution:
Against love's fire fear's frost hath dissolution.
The eye of heaven is out, and misty night
Covers the shame that follows sweet delight.

This said, his guilty hand pluck'd up the latch,
And with his knee the door he opens wide:
The dove sleeps fast that this night-owl will catch;
Thus treason works ere traitors be espied.
Who sees the lurking serpent, steps aside;
But she, sound sleeping, fearing no such thing,
Lies at the mercy of his mortal sting.

Into the chamber wickedly he stalks,
And gazeth on her yet-unstained bed:
The curtains being close, about he walks,
Rolling his greedy eye-balls in his head:
By their high treason is his heart misled;
Which gives the watch-word to his hand full soon,
To draw the cloud that hides the silver moon.

Look, as the fair and fiery-pointed sun,
Rushing from forth a cloud, bereaves our sight;
Even so, the curtain drawn, his eyes begun
To wink, being blinded with a greater light
Whether it is, that she reflects so bright,
That dazzleth them, or else some shame suppos'd
But blind they are, and keep themselves enclos'd

O! had they in that darksome prison died,
Then had they seen the period of their ill:
Then Collatine again, by Lucrece' side,
In his clear bed might have reposed still;
But they must ope, this blessed league to kill;
And holy-thoughted Lucrece to their sight
Must sell her joy, her life, her world's delight.

Her lily hand her rosy cheek lies under,
Cozening the pillow of a lawful kiss;
Who, therefore angry, seems to part in sunder
Swelling on either side, to want his bliss,
Between whose hills her head entombed is;
Where, like a virtuous monument, she lies,
To be admir'd of lewd, unhallow'd eyes.

Without the bed her other fair hand was,
On the green coverlet; whose perfect white
Show'd like an April daisy on the grass,
With pearly sweat, resembling dew of night.
Her eyes, like marigolds, had sheath'd their light
And canopied in darkness sweetly lay,
Till they might open to adorn the day.

Her hair, like golden threads, play'd with her breath;
O, modest wantons! wanton modesty!
Showing life's triumph in the map of death,
And death's dim look in life's mortality:
Each in her sleep themselves so beautify,

As if between them twain there were no strife,
But that life liv'd in death, and death in life.

Her breasts, like ivory globes circled with blue,
A pair of maiden worlds unconquered;
Save of their lord, no bearing yoke they knew,
And him by oath they truly honoured.
These worlds in Tarquin new ambition bred;
Who, like a foul usurper, went about
From this fair throne to heave the owner out.

What could he see, but mightily he noted?
What did he note, but strongly he desir'd?
What he beheld, on that he firmly doted,
And in his will his wilful eye he tir'd.
With more than admiration he admir'd
Her azure veins, her alabaster skin,
Her coral lips, her snow-white dimpled chin.

As the grim lion fawneth o'er his prey,
Sharp hunger by the conquest satisfied,
So o'er this sleeping soul doth Tarquin stay,
His rage of lust by gazing qualified;
Slack'd, not suppress'd; for, standing by her side,
His eye, which late this mutiny restrains,
Unto a greater uproar tempts his veins:

And they, like straggling slaves for pillage fighting
Obdurate vassals, fell exploits effecting,
In bloody death and ravishment delighting,
Nor children's tears nor mother's groans respecting
Swell in their pride, the onset still expecting;
Anon his beating heart, alarum striking,
Gives the hot charge, and bids them do their liking

His drumming heart cheers up his burning eye;
His eye commends the leading to his hand;

His hand, as proud of such a dignity,
Smoking with pride, march'd on to make his stand
On her bare breast, the heart of all her land;
Whose ranks of blue veins, as his hand did scale,
Left their round turrets destitute and pale.

They, mustering to the quiet cabinet
Where their dear governess and lady lies,
Do tell her she is dreadfully beset,
And fright her with confusion of their cries:
She, much amaz'd, breaks ope her lock'd-up eyes,
Who, peeping forth this tumult to behold,
Are by his flaming torch dimm'd and controll'd.

Imagine her, as one in dead of night
From forth dull sleep by dreadful fancy waking,
That thinks she hath beheld some ghastly sprite,
Whose grim aspect sets every joint a-shaking;
What terror 'tis! but she, in worser taking,
From sleep disturbed, heedfully doth view
The sight which makes supposed terror true.

Wrapp'd and confounded in a thousand fears,
Like to a new-kill'd bird she trembling lies:
She dares not look; yet, winking, there appears
Quick-shifting antics, ugly in her eyes:
Such shadows are the weak brain's forgeries;
Who, angry that the eyes fly from their lights,
In darkness daunts them with more dreadful sights.

His hand, that yet remains upon her breast,
(Rude ram, to batter such an ivory wall!)
May feel her heart (poor citizen!) distress'd,
Wounding itself to death, rise up and fall,
Beating her bulk, that his hand shakes withal.[18]

[18] *Bulk* was formerly used for *breast*. So in Hamlet, Act ii. sc. 1: "He rais'd a sigh so piteous and profound, that it did seem to shatter all his *bulk*, and end his being." H.

This moves in him more rage, and lesser pity,
To make the breach, and enter this sweet city

First, like a trumpet, doth his tongue begin
To sound a parley to his heartless foe;
Who o'er the white sheet peers her whiter chin,
The reason of this rash alarm to know,
Which he by dumb demeanour seeks to show;
But she with vehement prayers urgeth still,
Under what colour he commits this ill.

Thus he replies: The colour in thy face
(That even for anger makes the lily pale,
And the red rose blush at her own disgrace)
Shall plead for me, and tell my loving tale;
Under that colour am I come to scale
Thy never-conquer'd fort: the fault is thine,
For those thine eyes betray thee unto mine.

Thus I forestall thee, if thou mean to chide:
Thy beauty hath ensnar'd thee to this night,
Where thou with patience must my will abide,—
My will, that marks thee for my earth's delight,
Which I to conquer sought with all my might;
But as reproof and reason beat it dead,
By thy bright beauty was it newly bred.

I see what crosses my attempt will bring;
I know what thorns the growing rose defends;
I think the honey guarded with a sting:
All this, beforehand, counsel comprehends;
But will is deaf, and hears no heedful friends:
Only he hath an eye to gaze on beauty,
And dotes on what he looks, 'gainst law or duty.

I have debated, even in my soul,
What wrong, what shame, what sorrow I shall breed

But nothing can affection's course control,
Or stop the headlong fury of his speed:
I know repentant tears ensue the deed,
Reproach, disdain, and deadly enmity,
Yet strive I to embrace mine infamy.

This said, he shakes aloft his Roman blade,
Which, like a falcon towering in the skies,
Coucheth the fowl below with his wings' shade;
Whose crooked beak threats, if he mount he dies
So under his insulting falchion lies
Harmless Lucretia, marking what he tells,
With trembling fear, as fowl hear falcons' bells.

Lucrece, quoth he, this night I must enjoy thee,
If thou deny, then force must work my way,
For in thy bed I purpose to destroy thee:
That done, some worthless slave of thine I'll slay
To kill thine honour with thy life's decay;
And in thy dead arms do I mean to place him,
Swearing I slew him, seeing thee embrace him.

So thy surviving husband shall remain
The scornful mark of every open eye;
Thy kinsmen hang their heads at this disdain,
Thy issue blurr'd with nameless bastardy;
And thou, the author of their obloquy,
Shalt have thy trespass cited up in rhymes,
And sung by children in succeeding times.

But, if thou yield, I rest thy secret friend:
The fault unknown is as a thought unacted;
A little harm, done to a great good end,
For lawful policy remains enacted.
The poisonous simple sometimes is compacted
In a pure compound; being so applied
His venom in effect is purified.

Then, for thy husband and thy children's sake,
Tender my suit: bequeath not to their lot
The shame that from them no device can take,
The blemish that will never be forgot;
Worse than a slavish wipe, or birth-hour's blot
For marks descried in men's nativity
Are nature's faults, not their own infamy.

Here with a cockatrice' dead-killing eye
He rouseth up himself, and makes a pause;
While she, the picture of pure piety,
Like a white hind under the grype's sharp claws,[19]
Pleads in a wilderness, where are no laws,
To the rough beast that knows no gentle right,
Nor aught obeys but his foul appetite.

But, when a black-fac'd cloud the world doth threat,
In his dim mist th' aspiring mountains hiding,
From earth's dark womb some gentle gust doth get,
Which blows these pitchy vapours from their biding,
Hindering their present fall by this dividing;
So his unhallow'd haste her words delays,
And moody Pluto winks while Orpheus plays.

Yet, foul night-waking cat, he doth but dally,
While in his hold-fast foot the weak mouse panteth:
Her sad behaviour feeds his vulture folly,
A swallowing gulf, that even in plenty wanteth:
His ear her prayers admits, but his heart granteth
No penetrable entrance to her plaining:
Tears harden lust, though marble wear with raining.

Her pity-pleading eyes are sadly fix'd
In the remorseless wrinkles of his face;
Her modest eloquence with sighs is mix'd,
Which to her oratory adds more grace.
She puts the period often from his place;

[19] The *grype* is the griffin or vulture.

And 'midst the sentence so her accent breaks,
That twice she doth begin, ere once she speaks.

She conjures him by high almighty Jove,
By knighthood, gentry, and sweet friendship's oath
By her untimely tears, her husband's love,
By holy human law, and common troth,
By heaven and earth, and all the power of both,
That to his borrow'd bed he make retire,
And stoop to honour, not to foul desire.

Quoth she, Reward not hospitality
With such black payment as thou hast pretended;[20]
Mud not the fountain that gave drink to thee;
Mar not the thing that cannot be amended;
End thy ill aim, before thy shoot be ended.
He is no woodman, that doth bend his bow
To strike a poor unseasonable doe.

My husband is thy friend, for his sake spare me;
Thyself art mighty, for thine own sake leave me;
Myself a weakling, do not then ensnare me;
Thou look'st not like deceit, do not deceive me:
My sighs, like whirlwinds, labour hence to heave thee.
If ever man were mov'd with woman's moans,
Be moved with my tears, my sighs, my groans.

All which together, like a troubled ocean,
Beat at thy rocky and wreck-threatening heart,
To soften it with their continual motion;
For stones dissolv'd to water do convert.
O, if no harder than a stone thou art,
Melt at my tears, and be compassionate!
Soft pity enters at an iron gate.

[20] We have already, in note 9, had *intending* for *pretending* Here, in like manner, we have *intended* for *pretended*. See Macbeth, Act ii. sc. 3, note 10; and sc. 4, note 5. H.

In Tarquin's likeness I did entertain thee.
Hast thou put on his shape to do him shame?
To all the host of heaven I complain me,
Thou wrong'st his honour, wound'st his princely name:
Thou art not what thou seem'st; and if the same,
Thou seem'st not what thou art, a god, a king;
For kings, like gods, should govern every thing.

How will thy shame be seeded in thine age,
When thus thy vices bud before thy spring!
If in thy hope thou dar'st do such outrage,
What dar'st thou not, when once thou art a king?
O, be remember'd! no outrageous thing
From vassal actors can be wip'd away;
Then, kings' misdeeds cannot be hid in clay.

This deed will make thee only lov'd for fear;
But happy monarchs still are fear'd for love:
With foul offenders thou perforce must bear,
When they in thee the like offences prove:
If but for fear of this, thy will remove;
For princes are the glass, the school, the book,
Where subjects' eyes do learn, do read, do look.

And wilt thou be the school where Lust shall learn?
Must he in thee read lectures of such shame?
Wilt thou be glass, wherein it shall discern
Authority for sin, warrant for blame,
To privilege dishonour in thy name?
Thou back'st reproach against long-living laud,
And mak'st fair reputation but a bawd.

Hast thou command? by Him that gave it thee,
From a pure heart command thy rebel will.
Draw not thy sword to guard iniquity,
For it was lent thee all that brood to kill.
Thy princely office how canst thou fulfil,

When, pattern'd by thy fault, foul Sin may say,
He learn'd to sin, and thou didst teach the way?

Think but how vile a spectacle it were,
To view thy present trespass in another.
Men's faults do seldom to themselves appear;
Their own transgressions partially they smother:
This guilt would seem death-worthy in thy brother.
O, how are they wrapp'd in with infamies,
That from their own misdeeds askance their eyes!

To thee, to thee, my heav'd-up hands appeal,
Not to seducing lust, thy rash relier;
I sue for exil'd majesty's repeal;
Let him return, and flattering thoughts retire:
His true respect will prison false desire,
And wipe the dim mist from thy doting eyne,
That thou shalt see thy state, and pity mine.

Have done, quoth he: my uncontrolled tide
Turns not, but swells the higher by this let:
Small lights are soon blown out; huge fires abide,
And with the wind in greater fury fret:
The petty streams, that pay a daily debt
To their salt sovereign with their fresh falls' haste,
Add to his flow, but alter not his taste.

Thou art, quoth she, a sea, a sovereign king;
And, lo! there falls into thy boundless flood
Black lust, dishonour, shame, misgoverning,
Who seek to stain the ocean of thy blood.
If all these petty ills shall change thy good,
Thy sea within a puddle's womb is hears'd,
And not the puddle in thy sea dispers'd.

So shall these slaves be king, and thou their slave;
Thou nobly base, they basely dignified:

Thou their fair life, and they thy fouler grave;
Thou loathed in their shame, they in thy pride:
The lesser thing should not the greater hide;
The cedar stoops not to the base shrub's foot,
But low shrubs wither at the cedar's root.

So let thy thoughts, low vassals to thy state,—
No more, quoth he; by Heaven, I will not hear thee:
Yield to my love; if not, enforced hate,
Instead of love's coy touch, shall rudely tear thee:
That done, despitefully I mean to bear thee
Unto the base bed of some rascal groom,
To be thy partner in this shameful doom.

This said, he sets his foot upon the light,
For light and lust are deadly enemies:
Shame, folded up in blind, concealing night,
When most unseen, then most doth tyrannize.
The wolf hath seiz'd his prey, the poor lamb cries
Till with her own white fleece her voice controll'd
Entombs her outcry in her lips' sweet fold:

For with the nightly linen that she wears
He pens her piteous clamours in her head;
Cooling his hot face in the chastest tears
That ever modest eyes with sorrow shed.
O, that prone lust should stain so pure a bed!
The spots whereof could weeping purify,
Her tears should drop on them perpetually.

But she hath lost a dearer thing than life,
And he hath won what he would lose again:
This forced league doth force a further strife;
This momentary joy breeds months of pain;
This hot desire converts to cold disdain:
Pure chastity is rifled of her store,
And lust, the thief, far poorer than before.

Look, as the full-fed hound or gorged hawk,
Unapt for tender smell or speedy flight,
Make slow pursuit, or altogether balk
The prey, wherein by nature they delight;
So surfeit-taking Tarquin fares this night;
His taste delicious, in digestion souring,
Devours his will, that liv'd by foul devouring.

O, deeper sin than bottomless conceit
Can comprehend in still imagination!
Drunken desire must vomit his receipt,
Ere he can see his own abomination.
While lust is in his pride, no exclamation
Can curb his heat, or rein his rash desire,
Till, like a jade, self-will himself doth tire:

And then, with lank and lean discolour'd cheek,
With heavy eye, knit brow, and strengthless pace,
Feeble desire, all recreant, poor, and meek,
Like to a bankrupt beggar wails his case:
The flesh being proud, desire doth fight with grace,
For there it revels; and when that decays,
The guilty rebel for remission prays.

So fares it with this faultful lord of Rome,
Who this accomplishment so hotly chas'd;
For now against himself he sounds this doom,
That through the length of times he stands disgrac'd:
Besides, his soul's fair temple is defac'd;
To whose weak ruins muster troops of cares,
To ask the spotted princess how she fares.

She says, her subjects with foul insurrection
Have batter'd down her consecrated wall,
And by their mortal fault brought in subjection
Her immortality, and made her thrall
To living death, and pain perpetual;

Which in her prescience she controlled still,
But her foresight could not forestall their will.

Even in this thought, through the dark night he stealeth,
A captive victor, that hath lost in gain;
Bearing away the wound that nothing healeth,
The scar that will despite of cure remain;
Leaving his spoil perplex'd in greater pain.
She bears the load of lust he left behind,
And he the burthen of a guilty mind.

He, like a thievish dog, creeps sadly thence,
She, like a wearied lamb, lies panting there;
He scowls, and hates himself for his offence,
She, desperate, with her nails her flesh doth tear;
He faintly flies, sweating with guilty fear,
She stays, exclaiming on the direful night;
He runs, and chides his vanish'd, loath'd delight.

He thence departs a heavy convertite,
She there remains a hopeless castaway;
He in his speed looks for the morning light,
She prays she never may behold the day:
For day, quoth she, night's scapes doth open lay;
And my true eyes have never practis'd how
To cloak offences with a cunning brow.

They think not but that every eye can see
The same disgrace which they themselves behold;
And therefore would they still in darkness be,
To have their unseen sin remain untold:
For they their guilt with weeping will unfold,
And grave, like water that doth eat in steel,
Upon my cheeks what helpless shame I feel.

Here she exclaims against repose and rest,
And bids her eyes hereafter still be blind:

She wakes her heart by beating on her breast,
And bids it leap from thence, where it may find
Some purer chest to close so pure a mind.
Frantic with grief, thus breathes she forth her spite
Against the unseen secrecy of night:

O, comfort-killing night, image of hell!
Dim register and notary of shame!
Black stage for tragedies and murders fell!
Vast sin-concealing chaos! nurse of blame!
Blind, muffled bawd! dark harbour for defame!
Grim cave of death! whispering conspirator
With close-tongued treason and the ravisher!

O, hateful, vaporous, and foggy night!
Since thou art guilty of my cureless crime,
Muster thy mists to meet the eastern light,
Make war against proportion'd course of time;
Or, if thou wilt permit the sun to climb
His wonted height, yet, ere he go to bed,
Knit poisonous clouds about his golden head.

With rotten damps ravish the morning air;
Let their exhal'd unwholesome breaths make sick
The life of purity, the supreme fair,
Ere he arrive his weary noon-tide prick;
And let thy musty vapours march so thick,[21]
That in their smoky ranks his smother'd light
May set at noon, and make perpetual night.

Were Tarquin night, (as he is but night's child,)
The silver-shining queen he would distain;
Her twinkling handmaids too, by him defil'd,
Through night's black bosom should not peep again
So should I have copartners in my pain;

[21] Such is the reading of the first edition: the other copies have *misty* instead of *musty*. "*Misty* vapours" is too much like "*wet* water." *Musty* agrees well with the epithets *rotten* and *unwholesome*. H.

And fellowship in woe doth woe assuage,
As palmers' chat makes short their pilgrimage:

Where now I have no one to blush with me,[22]
To cross their arms, and hang their heads with mine
To mask their brows, and hide their infamy;
But I alone, alone must sit and pine,
Seasoning the earth with showers of silver brine;
Mingling my talk with tears, my grief with groans,
Poor wasting monuments of lasting moans.

O night! thou furnace of foul-reeking smoke,
Let not the jealous day behold that face
Which, underneath thy black all-hiding cloak,
Immodestly lies martyr'd with disgrace:
Keep still possession of thy gloomy place,
That all the faults which in thy reign are made
May likewise be sepulcher'd in thy shade.

Make me not object to the tell-tale day!
The light will show, character'd in my brow,
The story of sweet chastity's decay,
The impious breach of holy wedlock vow:
Yea, the illiterate, that know not how
To 'cipher what is writ in learned books,
Will quote my loathsome trespass in my looks.[23]

The nurse, to still her child, will tell my story,
And fright her crying babe with Tarquin's name;
The orator, to deck his oratory,
Will couple my reproach to Tarquin's shame;
Feast-finding minstrels, tuning my defame,
Will tie the hearers to attend each line,
How Tarquin wronged me, I Collatine.

[22] *Where* in this line has the force of *whereas*; a frequent usage in old poetry. H.

[23] To *quote* is to *mark* or *observe*; often so used. H.

Let my good name, that senseless reputation,
For Collatine's dear love be kept unspotted:
If that be made a theme for disputation,
The branches of another root are rotted,
And undeserv'd reproach to him allotted,
That is as clear from this attaint of mine,
As I, ere this, was pure to Collatine.

O, unseen shame! invisible disgrace!
O, unfelt sore! crest-wounding, private scar!
Reproach is stamp'd in Collatinus' face,
And Tarquin's eye may read the mot afar,[24]
How he in peace is wounded, not in war.
Alas! how many bear such shameful blows,
Which not themselves, but he that gives them knows!

If, Collatine, thine honour lay in me,
From me by strong assault it is bereft:
My honey lost, and I, a drone-like bee,
Have no perfection of my summer left,
But robb'd and ransack'd by injurious theft:
In thy weak hive a wandering wasp hath crept,
And suck'd the honey which thy chaste bee kept.

Yet am I guilty of thy honour's wrack;
Yet for thy honour did I entertain him:
Coming from thee, I could not put him back,
For it had been dishonour to disdain him:
Besides, of weariness he did complain him,
And talk'd of virtue:—O, unlook'd-for evil,
When virtue is profan'd in such a devil!

Why should the worm intrude the maiden bud?
Or hateful cuckoos hatch in sparrows' nests?[25]

[24] *Mot* is *word*; the *motto* of reproach. H.
[25] The cuckoo's naughty custom of stealing her eggs into the

Or toads infect fair founts with venom mud?
Or tyrant folly lurk in gentle breasts?
Or kings be breakers of their own behests?
But no perfection is so absolute,
That some impurity doth not pollute.

The aged man, that coffers up his gold,
Is plagued with cramps and gouts and painful fits,
And scarce hath eyes his treasure to behold,
But like still-pining Tantalus he sits,
And useless barns the harvest of his wits;
Having no other pleasure of his gain,
But torment that it cannot cure his pain.

So, then, he hath it, when he cannot use it,
And leaves it to be master'd by his young;
Who in their pride do presently abuse it:
Their father was too weak, and they too strong,
To hold their cursed-blessed fortune long.
The sweets we wish for turn to loathed sours,
Even in the moment that we call them ours.

Unruly blasts wait on the tender spring;
Unwholesome weeds take root with precious flowers
The adder hisses where the sweet birds sing;
What virtue breeds iniquity devours:
We have no good that we can say is ours,
But ill-annexed Opportunity
Or kills his life, or else his quality.

O, Opportunity! thy guilt is great:
'Tis thou that execut'st the traitor's treason;

sparrow's nest, and there leaving them to be hatched by the gentle owner, is often alluded to by the old poets. Hence, perhaps, the notion of the cuckoo mocking married men, in the song at the end of Love's Labour's Lost. See 1 Henry IV., Act v. sc. 1, note 4

H.

'Thou sett'st the wolf where he the lamb may get;
Whoever plots the sin, thou 'point'st the season:
'Tis thou that spurn'st at right, at law, at reason;
And in thy shady cell, where none may spy him,
Sits Sin, to seize the souls that wander by him.

Thou mak'st the vestal violate her oath;
Thou blow'st the fire when temperance is thaw'd;
Thou smother'st honesty, thou murder'st troth:
Thou foul abettor! thou notorious bawd!
Thou plantest scandal, and displacest laud:
Thou ravisher, thou traitor, thou false thief,
Thy honey turns to gall, thy joy to grief!

Thy secret pleasure turns to open shame;
Thy private feasting to a public fast;
Thy smoothing titles to a ragged name;[26]
Thy sugar'd tongue to bitter wormwood taste:
Thy violent vanities can never last.
How comes it, then, vile Opportunity,
Being so bad, such numbers seek for thee?

When wilt thou be the humble suppliant's friend,
And bring him where his suit may be obtain'd?
When wilt thou sort[27] an hour great strifes to end,
Or free that soul which wretchedness hath chain'd?
Give physic to the sick, ease to the pain'd?
The poor, lame, blind, halt, creep, cry out for thee,
But they ne'er meet with Opportunity.

The patient dies while the physician sleeps;
The orphan pines while the oppressor feeds;
Justice is feasting while the widow weeps;
Advice is sporting while infection breeds:
Thou grant'st no time for charitable deeds.

[26] *Smoothing* was very often used in the sense of *flattering*. See King Lear, Act ii. sc. 2, note 12. H.

[27] To *sort* is to *choose* or *select*. So in 3 Henry VI., Act v. sc 6: "But I will *sort* a pitchy day for thee." H.

Wrath, envy, treason, rape, and murders rages,
The heinous hours wait on them as their pages.

When truth and virtue have to do with thee,
A thousand crosses keep them from thy aid:
They buy thy help, but sin ne'er gives a fee;
He gratis comes, and thou art well appay'd,
As well to hear as grant what he hath said:
My Collatine would else have come to me
When Tarquin did; but he was stay'd by thee.

Guilty thou art of murder and of theft;
Guilty of perjury and subornation;
Guilty of treason, forgery, and shift;
Guilty of incest, that abomination:
An accessary, by thine inclination,
To all sins past, and all that are to come,
From the creation to the general doom.

Mis-shapen Time, copesmate of ugly night,[28]
Swift subtle post, carrier of grisly care;
Eater of youth, false slave to false delight,
Base watch of woes, sin's packhorse, virtue's snare,
Thou nursest all, and murder'st all that are.
O, hear me, then, injurious, shifting Time!
Be guilty of my death, since of my crime.

Why hath thy servant, Opportunity,
Betray'd the hours thou gav'st me to repose?
Cancell'd my fortunes, and enchained me
To endless date of never-ending woes?
Time's office is to fine the hate of foes;[29]
To eat up errors by opinion bred,
Not spend the dowry of a lawful bed.

[28] *Copesmate* is *companion.*

[29] To *fine*, as here used, is to *finish*, or *make an end of.* It is one of the Poet's Latinisms H.

Time's glory is to calm contending kings;
To unmask falsehood, and bring truth to light;
To stamp the seal of time in aged things;
To wake the morn, and sentinel the night;
To wrong the wronger till he render right;
To ruinate proud buildings with thy hours,
And smear with dust their glittering golden towers:

To fill with worm-holes stately monuments;
To feed oblivion with decay of things;
To blot old books, and alter their contents;
To pluck the quills from ancient ravens' wings;
To dry the old oak's sap, and cherish springs;
To spoil antiquities of hammer'd steel,
And turn the giddy round of Fortune's wheel;

To show the beldame daughters of her daughter:
To make the child a man, the man a child;
To slay the tiger that doth live by slaughter;
To tame the unicorn and lion wild;
To mock the subtle, in themselves beguil'd;
To cheer the ploughman with increaseful crops,
And waste huge stones with little water-drops.

Why work'st thou mischief in thy pilgrimage,
Unless thou could'st return to make amends?
One poor retiring minute in an age
Would purchase thee a thousand thousand friends,
Lending him wit that to bad debtors lends:
O! this dread night, would'st thou one hour come back,
I could prevent this storm, and shun thy wrack

Thou ceaseless lackey to eternity,
With some mischance cross Tarquin in his flight;
Devise extremes beyond extremity,
To make him curse this cursed, crimeful night:
Let ghastly shadows his lewd eyes affright,

And the dire thought of his committed evil
Shape every bush a hideous, shapeless devil.

Disturb his hours of rest with restless trances;
Afflict him in his bed with bedrid groans;
Let there bechance him pitiful mischances,
To make him moan, but pity not his moans:
Stone him with harden'd hearts, harder than stones
And let mild women to him lose their mildness,
Wilder to him than tigers in their wildness.

Let him have time to tear his curled hair;
Let him have time against himself to rave;
Let him have time of time's help to despair;
Let him have time to live a loathed slave;
Let him have time a beggar's orts to crave,
And time to see one that by alms doth live
Disdain to him disdained scraps to give.

Let him have time to see his friends his foes,
And merry fools to mock at him resort;
Let him have time to mark how slow time goes
In time of sorrow, and how swift and short
His time of folly, and his time of sport:
And ever let his unrecalling crime [30]
Have time to wail th' abusing of his time.

O Time, thou tutor both to good and bad,
Teach me to curse him that thou taught'st this ill.
At his own shadow let the thief run mad,
Himself himself seek every hour to kill!
Such wretched hands such wretched blood should spill;
For who so base would such an office have
As slanderous death's-man to so base a slave?

[30] *Unrecalling* for *irrevocable*. The plays furnish many such instances of the active and passive forms used indifferently. See Measure for Measure, Act iii. sc. 1, note 20. H.

The baser is he, coming from a king,
To shame his hope with deeds degenerate:
The mightier man, the mightier is the thing
That makes him honour'd, or begets him hate;
For greatest scandal waits on greatest state.
The moon being clouded presently is miss'd,
But little stars may hide them when they list.

The crow may bathe his coal-black wings in mire,
And unperceiv'd fly with the filth away;
But if the like the snow-white swan desire,
The stain upon his silver down will stay.
Poor grooms are sightless night, kings glorious day:
Gnats are unnoted wheresoe'er they fly,
But eagles gaz'd upon with every eye.

Out, idle words! servants to shallow fools,
Unprofitable sounds, weak arbitrators!
Busy yourselves in skill-contending schools;
Debate where leisure serves with dull debaters;
To trembling clients be you mediators:
For me, I force not argument a straw,[31]
Since that my case is past the help of law.

In vain I rail at Opportunity,
At Time, at Tarquin, and uncheerful night;
In vain I cavil with my infamy;
In vain I spurn at my confirm'd despite:
This helpless smoke of words doth me no right.
The remedy indeed to do me good,
Is to let forth my foul, defiled blood.

Poor hand, why quiver'st thou at this decree?
Honour thyself to rid me of this shame;

[31] That is, I do not *care* a straw for argument. See Love's Labour's Lost, Act v sc. 2, note 26 B.

For if I die, my honour lives in thee;
But if I live, thou liv'st in my defame:
Since thou could'st not defend thy loyal dame,
And wast afeard to scratch her wicked foe,
Kill both thyself and her for yielding so.

This said, from her betumbled couch she starteth
To find some desperate instrument of death;
But this no slaughter-house no tool imparteth,
To make more vent for passage of her breath,
Which, thronging through her lips, so vanisheth
As smoke from Ætna, that in air consumes,
Or that which from discharged cannon fumes.

In vain, quoth she, I live; and seek in vain
Some happy mean to end a hapless life:
I fear'd by Tarquin's falchion to be slain,
Yet for the selfsame purpose seek a knife;
But when I fear'd, I was a loyal wife.
So am I now: — O, no! that cannot be;
Of that true type hath Tarquin rifled me.

O! that is gone, for which I sought to live,
And therefore now I need not fear to die:
To clear this spot by death, at least, I give
A badge of fame to slander's livery;
A dying life to living infamy.
Poor, helpless help, the treasure stolen away,
To burn the guiltless casket where it lay!

Well, well, dear Collatine, thou shalt not know
The stained taste of violated troth;
I will not wrong thy true affection so,
To flatter thee with an infringed oath:
This bastard graff shall never come to growth:
He shall not boast, who did thy stock pollute,
That thou art doting father of his fruit.

Nor shall he smile at thee in secret thought,
Nor laugh with his companions at thy state;
But thou shalt know thy interest was not bought
Basely with gold, but stol'n from forth thy gate.
For me, I am the mistress of my fate,
And with my trespass never will dispense,
Till life to death acquit my forc'd offence.

I will not poison thee with my attaint,
Nor fold my fault in cleanly-coin'd excuses;
My sable ground of sin I will not paint,
To hide the truth of this false night's abuses:
My tongue shall utter all; mine eyes, like sluices
As from a mountain spring that feeds a dale,
Shall gush pure streams to purge my impure tale.

By this, lamenting Philomel had ended
The well-tun'd warble of her nightly sorrow,
And solemn night with slow sad gait descended
To ugly hell; when, lo! the blushing morrow
Lends light to all fair eyes that light will borrow:
But cloudy Lucrece shames herself to see,
And therefore still in night would cloister'd be.

Revealing day through every cranny spies,
And seems to point her out where she sits weeping;
To whom she sobbing speaks: O, eye of eyes!
Why pry'st thou through my window? leave thy peeping;
Mock with thy tickling beams eyes that are sleeping;
Brand not my forehead with thy piercing light,
For day hath nought to do what's done by night.

Thus cavils she with every thing she sees.
True grief is fond and testy as a child,

Who, wayward once, his mood with nought agrees
Old woes, not infant sorrows, bear them mild
Continuance tames the one; the other wild,
Like an unpractis'd swimmer plunging still,
With too much labour drowns for want of skill.

So she, deep-drenched in a sea of care,
Holds disputation with each thing she views,
And to herself all sorrow doth compare:
No object but her passion's strength renews;
And as one shifts, another straight ensues:
Sometime her grief is dumb, and hath no words;
Sometime 'tis mad, and too much talk affords.

The little birds, that tune their morning's joy,
Make her moans mad with their sweet melody;
For mirth doth search the bottom of annoy:
Sad souls are slain in merry company;
Grief best is pleas'd with grief's society:
True sorrow then is feelingly suffic'd,
When with like semblance it is sympathis'd.

'Tis double death to drown in ken of shore;
He ten times pines, that pines beholding food,
To see the salve, doth make the wound ache more
Great grief grieves most at that would do it good;
Deep woes roll forward like a gentle flood,
Who, being stopp'd, the bounding banks o'erflows
Grief dallied with nor law nor limit knows.

You mocking birds, quoth she, your tunes entomb
Within your hollow swelling feather'd breasts,
And in my hearing be you mute and dumb:
My restless discord loves no stops nor rests;[32]
A woeful hostess brooks not merry guests.

[32] *Stops* and *rests* are terms in music.

Relish your nimble notes to pleasing ears;[33]
Distress likes dumps, when time is kept with tears.

Come, Philomel, that sing'st of ravishment,
Make thy sad grove in my dishevell'd hair.
As the dank earth weeps at thy languishment,
So I at each sad strain will strain a tear,
And with deep groans the diapason bear:
For burden-wise I'll hum on Tarquin still,
While thou on Tereus descant'st, better skill.[34]

And whiles against a thorn thou bear'st thy part,[35]
To keep thy sharp woes waking, wretched I,
To imitate thee well, against my heart
Will fix a sharp knife, to affright mine eye;
Who, if it wink, shall thereon fall and die.
These means, as frets upon an instrument,
Shall tune our heart-strings to true languishment.

And for, poor bird, thou sing'st not in the day,
As shaming any eye should thee behold,
Some dark deep desert, seated from the way,
That knows not parching heat nor freezing cold,
We will find out; and there we will unfold,
To creatures stern, sad tunes to change their kinds:
Since men prove beasts, let beasts bear gentle minds.

As the poor frighted deer, that stands at gaze,
Wildly determining which way to fly;

[33] *Pleasing* for *pleased*, as in note 30. — A *dump* is a melancholy song. H.

[34] That is, *with* better skill. — *Descant* was a musical term for what is now called *variation*. See The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Act i. sc. 2, note 7. — Philomela, the daughter of Pandion, king of Athens, being ravished by Tereus, the husband of her sister Progne, was turned into a nightingale, her sister into a swallow, and Tereus into a lapwing. H.

[35] Alluding to the nightingale's singing with her breast against a thorn. E.

Or one encompass'd with a winding maze.
That cannot tread the way out readily;
So with herself is she in mutiny,
To live or die which of the twain were better,
When life is sham'd, and death reproach's debtor.

To kill myself, quoth she, alack! what were it,
But with my body my poor soul's pollution?
They that lose half with greater patience bear it,
Than they whose whole is swallow'd in confusion
That mother tries a merciless conclusion,[36]
Who, having two sweet babes, when death takes one,
Will slay the other, and be nurse to none.

My body or my soul, which was the dearer,
When the one pure, the other made divine?
Whose love of either to myself was nearer,
When both were kept for Heaven and Collatine?
Ah me! the bark peel'd from the lofty pine,
His leaves will wither, and his sap decay;
So must my soul, her bark being peel'd away.

Her house is sack'd, her quiet interrupted,
Her mansion batter'd by the enemy;
Her sacred temple spotted, spoil'd, corrupted,
Grossly engirt with daring infamy:
Then, let it not be call'd impiety,
If in this blemish'd fort I make some hole,
Through which I may convey this troubled soul.

Yet die I will not, till my Collatine
Have heard the cause of my untimely death;
That he may vow, in that sad hour of mine,
Revenge on him that made me stop my breath.
My stained blood to Tarquin I'll bequeath,

[36] To try *conclusions* is to try *experiments*. See Hamlet, Act iii sc. 4, note 33. H.

Which, by him tainted, shall for him be spent,
And as his due writ in my testament.

My honour I'll bequeath unto the knife
That wounds my body so dishonoured.
'Tis honour to deprive dishonour'd life;
The one will live, the other being dead:
So of shame's ashes shall my fame be bred;
For in my death I murder shameful scorn:
My shame so dead, mine honour is new-born.

Dear lord of that dear jewel I have lost,
What legacy shall I bequeath to thee?
My resolution, love, shall be thy boast,
By whose example thou reveng'd may'st be.
How Tarquin must be us'd, read it in me:
Myself, thy friend, will kill myself, thy foe,
And for my sake serve thou false Tarquin so.

This brief abridgment of my will I make:
My soul and body to the skies and ground;
My resolution, husband, do thou take;
Mine honour be the knife's that makes my wound;
My shame be his that did my fame confound;
And all my fame that lives disbursed be
To those that live, and think no shame of me

Thou, Collatine, shalt oversee this will;[37]
How was I overseen that thou shalt see it!
My blood shall wash the slander of mine ill;
My life's foul deed, my life's fair end shall free it.
Faint not, faint heart, but stoutly say, "So be it."
Yield to my hand; my hand shall conquer thee:
Thou dead, both die, and both shall victors be.

[37] It was usual for a testator to appoint *overseers* as well as executors of his will. The Poet himself named Thomas Russell and Francis Collins as overseers of his will. H.

This plot of death when sadly she had laid,
And wip'd the brinish pearl from her bright eyes,
With untun'd tongue she hoarsely calls her maid,
Whose swift obedience to her mistress hies;
For fleet-wing'd duty with thought's feathers flies
Poor Lucrece' cheeks unto her maid seem so,
As winter meads when sun doth melt their snow.

Her mistress she doth give demure good-morrow
With soft slow tongue, true mark of modesty,
And sorts a sad look to her lady's sorrow;—
For why? her face wore sorrow's livery;—
But durst not ask of her audaciously
Why her two suns were cloud-eclipsed so,
Nor why her fair cheeks over-wash'd with woe.

But as the earth doth weep, the sun being set,
Each flower moisten'd like a melting eye;
Even so the maid with swelling drops 'gan wet
Her circled eyne, enforc'd by sympathy
Of those fair suns, set in her mistress' sky,
Who in a salt-wav'd ocean quench their light,
Which makes the maid weep like the dewy night

A pretty while these pretty creatures stand,
Like ivory conduits coral cisterns filling:
One justly weeps, the other takes in hand
No cause but company of her drops spilling:
Their gentle sex to weep are often willing,
Grieving themselves to guess at others' smarts,
And then they drown their eyes, or break their hearts:

For men have marble, women waxen, minds,
And therefore are they form'd as marble will;
The weak oppress'd, th' impression of strange kinds
Is form'd in them by force, by fraud, or skill:
Then, call them not the authors of their ill,

No more than wax shall be accounted evil,
Wherein is stamp'd the semblance of a devil

Their smoothness, like a goodly champaign plain,
Lays open all the little worms that creep;
In men, as in a rough-grown grove, remain
Cave-keeping evils that obscurely sleep.
Through crystal walls each little mote will peep:
Though men can cover crimes with bold stern looks,
Poor women's faces are their own faults' books.

No man inveigh against the wither'd flower,
But chide rough winter that the flower hath kill'd!
Not that devour'd, but that which doth devour,
Is worthy blame. O! let it not be hild[38]
Poor women's faults, that they are so fulfill'd
With men's abuses: those proud lords, to blame,
Make weak-made women tenants to their shame.

The precedent whereof in Lucrece view,
Assail'd by night with circumstances strong
Of present death, and shame that might ensue
By that her death, to do her husband wrong:
Such danger to resistance did belong,
That dying fear through all her body spread;
And who cannot abuse a body dead?

By this, mild patience bid fair Lucrece speak
To the poor counterfeit of her complaining:
My girl, quoth she, on what occasion break
Those tears from thee, that down thy cheeks are raining?
If thou dost weep for grief of my sustaining,
Know, gentle wench, it small avails my mood:
If tears could help, mine own would do me good.

But tell me, girl, when went—(and there she stay'd
Till after a deep groan) Tarquin from hence?

[38] That is, *held*; so spelt for the sake of the rhyme.

Madam, ere I was up, replied the maid;
The more to blame my sluggard negligence:
Yet with the fault I thus far can dispense,—
Myself was stirring ere the break of day,
And, ere I rose, was Tarquin gone away.

But, lady, if your maid may be so bold,
She would request to know your heaviness.
O, peace! quoth Lucrece: if it should be told,
The repetition cannot make it less;
For more it is than I can well express:
And that deep torture may be call'd a hell,
When more is felt than one hath power to tell

Go, get me hither paper, ink, and pen;—
Yet save that labour, for I have them here.
What should I say?—One of my husband's men
Bid thou be ready by and by, to bear
A letter to my lord, my love, my dear:
Bid him with speed prepare to carry it;
The cause craves haste, and it will soon be writ.

Her maid is gone, and she prepares to write,
First hovering o'er the paper with her quill:
Conceit and grief an eager combat fight;
What wit sets down, is blotted straight with will;
This is too curious-good, this blunt and ill:
Much like a press of people at a door
Throng her inventions, which shall go before.

At last she thus begins: "Thou worthy lord
Of that unworthy wife that greeteth thee,
Health to thy person! next, vouchsafe t'afford
(If ever, love, thy Lucrece thou wilt see)
Some present speed to come and visit me.
So I commend me from our house in grief:
My woes are tedious, though my words are brief."

Here folds she up the tenor of her woe,
Her certain sorrow writ uncertainly.
By this short schedule Collatine may know
Her grief, but not her grief's true quality:
She dares not thereof make discovery,
Lest he should hold it her own gross abuse,
Ere she with blood had stain'd her stain'd excuse.

Besides, the life and feeling of her passion
She hoards, to spend when he is by to hear her;
When sighs and groans and tears may grace the fashion
Of her disgrace, the better so to clear her
From that suspicion which the world might bear her.
To shun this blot, she would not blot the letter
With words, till action might become them better.

To see sad sights moves more than hear them told;
For then the eye interprets to the ear
The heavy motion that it doth behold,
When every part a part of woe doth bear.
'Tis but a part of sorrow that we hear;
Deep sounds make lesser noise than shallow fords,
And sorrow ebbs, being blown with wind of words.

Her letter now is seal'd, and on it writ,
"At Ardea, to my lord, with more than haste."
The post attends, and she delivers it,
Charging the sour-fac'd groom to hie as fast
As lagging fowls before the northern blast:
Speed more than speed but dull and slow she deems;
Extremity still urgeth such extremes.

The homely villain courtesies to her low;
And, blushing on her, with a steadfast eye
Receives the scroll, without or yea or no,

And forth with bashful innocence doth hie:
But they, whose guilt within their bosoms lie,
Imagine every eye beholds their blame;
For Lucrece thought he blush'd to see her shame:

When, silly groom! God wot, it was defect
Of spirit, life, and bold audacity.
Such harmless creatures have a true respect
To talk in deeds, while others saucily
Promise more speed, but do it leisurely:
Even so, this pattern of the worn-out age
Pawn'd honest looks, but laid no words to gage

His kindled duty kindled her mistrust,
That two red fires in both their faces blaz'd;
She thought he blush'd, as knowing Tarquin's lust,
And, blushing with him, wistly on him gaz'd;
Her earnest eye did make him more amaz'd:
The more she saw the blood his cheeks replenish,
The more she thought he spied in her some blemish

But long she thinks till he return again,
And yet the duteous vassal scarce is gone.
The weary time she cannot entertain,
For now 'tis stale to sigh, to weep, and groan:
So woe hath wearied woe, moan tired moan,
That she her plaints a little while doth stay,
Pausing for means to mourn some newer way.

At last she calls to mind where hangs a piece
Of skilful painting, made for Priam's Troy;
Before the which is drawn the power of Greece,
For Helen's rape the city to destroy,
Threatening cloud-kissing Ilion with annoy;
Which the conceited painter drew so proud,[39]
As heaven, it seem'd, to kiss the turrets bow'd.

[39] *Conceited* is *ingenious* or *fanciful.*

A thousand lamentable objects there,
In scorn of nature, art gave lifeless life:
Many a dry drop seem'd a weeping tear,
Shed for the slaughter'd husband by the wife:
The red blood reek'd to show the painter's strife;
And dying eyes gleam'd forth their ashy lights,
Like dying coals burnt out in tedious nights.

There might you see the labouring pioneer
Begrim'd with sweat, and smeared all with dust;
And from the towers of Troy there would appear
The very eyes of men through loop-holes thrust,
Gazing upon the Greeks with little lust:
Such sweet observance in this work was had,
That one might see those far-off eyes look sad.

In great commanders grace and majesty
You might behold, triumphing in their faces;
In youth, quick bearing and dexterity;
And here and there the painter interlaces
Pale cowards, marching on with trembling paces,
Which heartless peasants did so well resemble,
That one would swear he saw them quake and tremble.

In Ajax and Ulysses, O, what art
Of physiognomy might one behold!
The face of either 'cipher'd either's heart;
Their face their manners most expressly told:
In Ajax' eyes blunt rage and rigour roll'd;
But the mild glance that sly Ulysses lent,
Show'd deep regard and smiling government.

There pleading might you see grave Nestor stand,
As 'twere encouraging the Greeks to fight;
Making such sober action with his hand,
That it beguil'd attention, charm'd the sight.
In speech, it seem'd, his beard, all silver white,

Wagg'd up and down, and from his lips did fly
Thin winding breath, which purl'd up to the sky.

About him were a press of gaping faces,
Which seem'd to swallow up his sound advice;
All jointly listening, but with several graces,
As if some mermaid did their ears entice:
Some high, some low; the painter was so nice,
The scalps of many, almost hid behind,
To jump up higher seem'd, to mock the mind.

Here one man's hand lean'd on another's head,
His nose being shadow'd by his neighbour's ear;
Here one, being throng'd, bears back, all boll'n and red;[40]
Another, smother'd, seems to pelt and swear:
And in their rage such signs of rage they bear,
As, but for loss of Nestor's golden words,
It seem'd they would debate with angry swords.

For much imaginary work was there;
Conceit deceitful, so compact, so kind,[41]
That for Achilles' image stood his spear,
Grip'd in an armed hand; himself, behind,
Was left unseen, save to the eye of mind
A hand, a foot, a face, a leg, a head,
Stood for the whole to be imagined.

And from the walls of strong-besieged Troy,
When their brave hope, bold Hector, march'd to field,
Stood many Trojan mothers, sharing joy
To see their youthful sons bright weapons wield;
And to their hope they such odd action yield,

[40] *Bollen* means *swollen*.

[41] That is, so *natural*. See The Merchant of Venice, Act i sc. 3, note 7

That through their light joy seemed to appear
(Like bright things stain'd) a kind of heavy fear.

And from the strond of Dardan, where they fought
To Simois' reedy banks the red blood ran;
Whose waves to imitate the battle sought
With swelling ridges; and their ranks began
To break upon the galled shore, and than[42]
Retire again, till, meeting greater ranks,
They join, and shoot their foam at Simois' banks.

To this well-painted piece is Lucrece come,
To find a face where all distress is stell'd.[43]
Many she sees, where cares have carved some,
But none where all distress and dolour dwell'd,
Till she despairing Hecuba beheld,
Staring on Priam's wounds with her old eyes,
Which bleeding under Pyrrhus' proud foot lies

In her the painter had anatomiz'd
Time's ruin, beauty's wreck, and grim care's reign:
Her cheeks with chaps and wrinkles were disguis'd;
Of what she was no semblance did remain:
Her blue blood chang'd to black in every vein,
Wanting the spring that those shrunk pipes had fed,
Show'd life imprison'd in a body dead.

On this sad shadow Lucrece spends her eyes,
And shapes her sorrow to the beldam's woes,
Who nothing wants to answer her but cries,
And bitter words to ban her cruel foes:
The painter was no god to lend her those;

[42] A form of *then*, frequently used by old poets for the sake of the rhyme.

[43] This word is printed *steld* in the original. The only other known instance of the word is in the Poet's twenty-fourth Sonnet

> "Mine eye hath play'd the painter, and hath *stell'd*
> Thy beauty's form in table of my heart." H.

And therefore Lucrece swears he did her wrong
To give her so much grief, and not a tongue.

Poor instrument, quoth she, without a sound,
I'll tune thy woes with my lamenting tongue,
And drop sweet balm in Priam's painted wound,
And rail on Pyrrhus that hath done him wrong,
And with my tears quench Troy, that burns so long,
And with my knife scratch out the angry eyes
Of all the Greeks that are thine enemies.

Show me the strumpet that began this stir,
That with my nails her beauty I may tear.
Thy heat of lust, fond Paris, did incur
This load of wrath that burning Troy doth bear.
Thine eye kindled the fire that burneth here;
And here in Troy, for trespass of thine eye,
The sire, the son, the dame, and daughter die.

Why should the private pleasure of some one
Become the public plague of many mo?[44]
Let sin, alone committed, light alone
Upon his head that hath transgressed so;
Let guiltless souls be freed from guilty woe.
For one's offence why should so many fall,
To plague a private sin in general?

Lo! here weeps Hecuba, here Priam dies,
Here manly Hector faints, here Troilus swounds;
Here friend by friend in bloody channel lies,
And friend to friend gives unadvised wounds,
And one man's lust these many lives confounds.
Had doting Priam check'd his son's desire,
Troy had been bright with fame, and not with fire.

[44] A form of *more*, often used by old writers, especially when it was needed for the rhyme. H.

Here feelingly she weeps Troy's painted woes,
For sorrow, like a heavy-hanging bell
Once set on ringing, with his own weight goes;
Then little strength rings out the doleful knell:
So Lucrece, set a-work, sad tales doth tell
To pencill'd pensiveness and colour'd sorrow:
She lends them words, and she their looks doth borrow.

She throws her eyes about the painting, round,
And whom she finds forlorn, she doth lament:
At last, she sees a wretched image bound,
That piteous looks to Phrygian shepherds lent.
His face, though full of cares, yet show'd content.
Onward to Troy with the blunt swains he goes,
So mild, that Patience seem'd to scorn his woes.

In him the painter labour'd with his skill
To hide deceit, and give the harmless show
An humble gait, calm looks, eyes wailing still,
A brow unbent, that seem'd to welcome woe;
Cheeks neither red nor pale, but mingled so,
That blushing red no guilty instance gave,
Nor ashy pale the fear that false hearts have:

But, like a constant and confirmed devil,
He entertain'd a show so seeming just,
And therein so ensconc'd his secret evil,
That jealousy itself could not mistrust,
False-creeping craft and perjury should thrust
Into so bright a day such black-fac'd storms,
Or blot with hell-born sin such saint-like forms.

The well-skill'd workman this mild image drew
For perjur'd Sinon, whose enchanting story
The credulous old Priam after slew;

Whose words like wild-fire burnt the shining glory
Of rich-built Ilion, that the skies were sorry
And little stars shot from their fixed places,
When their glass fell wherein they view'd their faces

This picture she advisedly perus'd,
And chid the painter for his wondrous skill;
Saying, some shape in Sinon's was abus'd,
So fair a form lodg'd not a mind so ill:
And still on him she gaz'd; and, gazing still,
Such signs of truth in his plain face she spied,
That she concludes the picture was belied.

It cannot be, quoth she, that so much guile—
(She would have said) can lurk in such a look;
But Tarquin's shape came in her mind the while,
And from her tongue, "can lurk" from "cannot" took:
"It cannot be" she in that sense forsook,
And turn'd it thus: It cannot be, I find,
But such a face should bear a wicked mind:

For even as subtle Sinon here is painted,
So sober-sad, so weary, and so mild,
As if with grief or travail he had fainted,
To me came Tarquin armed; so beguil'd
With outward honesty, but yet defil'd
With inward vice: as Priam him did cherish,
So did I Tarquin; so my Troy did perish.

Look, look! how listening Priam wets his eyes,
To see those borrow'd tears that Sinon sheds.
Priam, why art thou old, and yet not wise?
For every tear he falls a Trojan bleeds:
His eye drops fire, no water thence proceeds;
Those round clear pearls of his, that move thy pity,
Are balls of quenchless fire to burn thy city.

Such devils steal effects from lightless hell;
For Sinon in his fire doth quake with cold,
And in that cold hot-burning fire doth dwell;
These contraries such unity do hold,
Only to flatter fools, and make them bold:
So Priam's trust false Sinon's tears doth flatter,
That he finds means to burn his Troy with water.

Here, all enrag'd, such passion her assails,
That patience is quite beaten from her breast:
She tears the senseless Sinon with her nails,
Comparing him to that unhappy guest
Whose deed hath made herself herself detest.
At last she smilingly with this gives o'er:
Fool! fool! quoth she; his wounds will not be sore.

Thus ebbs and flows the current of her sorrow,
And time doth weary time with her complaining:
She looks for night, and then she longs for morrow;
And both she thinks too long with her remaining.
Short time seems long in sorrow's sharp sustaining
Though woe be heavy, yet it seldom sleeps;
And they that watch see time how slow it creeps:

Which all this time hath overslipp'd her thought,
That she with painted images hath spent;
Being from the feeling of her own grief brought
By deep surmise of others' detriment;
Losing her woes in shows of discontent.
It easeth some, though none it ever cur'd,
To think their dolour others have endur'd.

But now the mindful messenger, come back,
Brings home his lord and other company;
Who finds his Lucrece clad in mourning black;
And round about her tear-distained eye
Blue circles stream'd, like rainbows in the sky:

These water-galls[45] in her dim element
Foretell new storms to those already spent.

Which when her sad-beholding husband saw,
Amazedly in her sad face he stares:
Her eyes, though sod in tears, look'd red and raw;
Her lively colour kill'd with deadly cares.
He hath no power to ask her how she fares:
Both stood, like old acquaintance in a trance,
Met far from home, wondering each other's chance.

At last, he takes her by the bloodless hand,
And thus begins: What uncouth ill event
Hath thee befall'n, that thou dost trembling stand?
Sweet love, what spite hath thy fair colour spent?
Why art thou thus attir'd in discontent?
Unmask, dear dear, this moody heaviness,
And tell thy grief, that we may give redress.

Three times with sighs she gives her sorrow fire,
Ere once she can discharge one word of woe:
At length, address'd to answer his desire,
She modestly prepares to let them know
Her honour is ta'en prisoner by the foe;
While Collatine and his consorted lords
With sad attention long to hear her words.

And now this pale swan in her watery nest
Begins the sad dirge of her certain ending.
Few words, quoth she, shall fit the trespass best,
Where no excuse can give the fault amending:
In me more woes than words are now depending;
And my laments would be drawn out too long,
To tell them all with one poor tired tongue.

Then, be this all the task it hath to say:
Dear husband, in the interest of thy bed

[45] Watery appearance in the sky, attendant on rainbows.

A stranger came, and on that pillow lay,
Where thou wast wont to rest thy weary head;
And what wrong else may be imagined
By foul enforcement might be done to me,
From that, alas! thy Lucrece is not free.

For, in the dreadful dead of dark midnight,
With shining falchion in my chamber came
A creeping creature, with a flaming light,
And softly cried, "Awake, thou Roman dame,
And entertain my love; else lasting shame
On thee and thine this night I will inflict,
If thou my love's desire do contradict.

"For some hard-favour'd groom of thine," quoth he
"Unless thou yoke thy liking to my will,
I'll murder straight, and then I'll slaughter thee,
And swear I found you where you did fulfil
The loathsome act of lust, and so did kill
The lechers in their deed: this act will be
My fame, and thy perpetual infamy."

With this I did begin to start and cry,
And then against my heart he set his sword,
Swearing, unless I took all patiently,
I should not live to speak another word:
So should my shame still rest upon record,
And never be forgot in mighty Rome
Th' adulterate death of Lucrece and her groom.

Mine enemy was strong, my poor self weak,
And far the weaker with so strong a fear:
My bloody judge forbade my tongue to speak;
No rightful plea might plead for justice there:
His scarlet lust came evidence to swear
That my poor beauty had purloin'd his eyes,
And when the judge is robb'd, the prisoner dies

O! teach me how to make mine own excuse,
Or, at the least, this refuge let me find, —
Though my gross blood be stain'd with this abuse,
Immaculate and spotless is my mind:
That was not forc'd; that never was inclin'd
To accessory yieldings, but still pure
Doth in her poison'd closet yet endure.

Lo! here the hopeless merchant of this loss,
With head declin'd, and voice damm'd up with woe,
With sad-set eyes, and wreathed arms across,
From lips new-waxen pale begins to blow
The grief away, that stops his answer so;
But, wretched as he is, he strives in vain;
What he breathes out, his breath drinks up again.

As through an arch the violent roaring tide
Outruns the eye that doth behold his haste,
Yet in the eddy boundeth in his pride
Back to the strait that forc'd him on so fast,
In rage sent out, recall'd in rage, being past;
Even so his sighs, his sorrows, make a saw,
To push grief on, and back the same grief draw.

Which speechless woe of his poor she attendeth,
And his untimely frenzy thus awaketh:
Dear lord, thy sorrow to my sorrow lendeth
Another power: no flood by raining slaketh.
My woe too sensible thy passion maketh
More feeling-painful: let it, then, suffice
To drown one woe one pair of weeping eyes:

And for my sake, when I might charm thee so,
For she that was thy Lucrece, now attend me:
Be suddenly revenged on my foe,
Thine, mine, his own: suppose thou dost defend me
From what is past, the help that thou shalt lend me

Comes all too late, yet let the traitor die;
For sparing justice feeds iniquity.

But, ere I name him, you, fair lords, quoth she,
(Speaking to those that came with Collatine,)
Shall plight your honourable faiths to me,
With swift pursuit to venge this wrong of mine;
For 'tis a meritorious, fair design,
To chase injustice with revengeful arms:
Knights, by their oaths, should right poor ladies' harms.

At this request, with noble disposition
Each present lord began to promise aid,
As bound in knighthood to her imposition,
Longing to hear the hateful foe bewray'd;
But she, that yet her sad task hath not said,
The protestation stops. O! speak, quoth she,
How may this forced stain be wip'd from me?

What is the quality of mine offence,
Being constrain'd with dreadful circumstance?
May my pure mind with the foul act dispense,
My low-declined honour to advance?
May any terms acquit me from this chance?
The poison'd fountain clears itself again;
And why not I from this compelled stain?

With this, they all at once began to say,
Her body's stain her mind untainted clears;
While with a joyless smile she turns away
The face, that map which deep impression bears
Of hard misfortune, carv'd in it with tears.
No, no, quoth she; no dame, hereafter living,
By my excuse shall claim excuse's giving.

Here, with a sigh as if her heart would break,
She throws forth Tarquin's name: He, he, she says

But more than "he" her poor tongue could not
speak;
Till, after many accents and delays,
Untimely breathings, sick and short assays,
She utters this: He, he, fair lords, 'tis he,
That guides this hand to give this wound to me.

Even here she sheathed in her harmless breast
A harmful knife, that thence her soul unsheath'd:
That blow did bail it from the deep unrest
Of that polluted prison where it breath'd:
Her contrite sighs unto the clouds bequeath'd
Her winged sprite, and through her wounds doth fly
Life's lasting date from cancell'd destiny.

Stone-still, astonish'd with this deadly deed,
Stood Collatine and all his lordly crew;
Till Lucrece' father, that beholds her bleed,
Himself on her self-slaughter'd body threw:
And from the purple fountain Brutus drew
The murderous knife, and, as it left the place,
Her blood, in poor revenge, held it in chase;

And, bubbling from her breast, it doth divide
In two slow rivers, that the crimson blood
Circles her body in on every side,
Who like a late-sack'd island vastly stood,[46]
Bare and unpeopled, in this fearful flood.
Some of her blood still pure and red remain'd,
And some look'd black, and that false Tarquin
stain'd.

About the mourning and congealed face
Of that black blood, a watery rigol goes,[47]

[46] That is, stood *waste* or *desolate;* a sense of *vastly* now obsolete. For similar uses of the substantive *vast,* see Hamlet, Act i. sc. 2. note 27. H.

[47] A *rigol* is a *circle* See 2 Henry IV., Act iv. sc. 4 note 15

Which seems to weep upon the tainted place:
And ever since, as pitying Lucrece' woes,
Corrupted blood some watery token shows;
And blood untainted still doth red abide,
Blushing at that which is so putrefied.

Daughter, dear daughter! old Lucretius cries,
That life was mine, which thou hast here depriv'd
If in the child the father's image lies,
Where shall I live, now Lucrece is unliv'd?
Thou wast not to this end from me deriv'd.
If children pre-decease progenitors,
We are their offspring, and they none of ours.

Poor broken glass, I often did behold
In thy sweet semblance my old age new-born,
But now that fair fresh mirror, dim and old,
Shows me a bare-bon'd death by time outworn;
O! from thy cheeks my image thou hast torn,
And shiver'd all the beauty of my glass,
That I no more can see what once I was.

O time! cease thou thy course, and last no longer,
If they surcease to be, that should survive.
Shall rotten death make conquest of the stronger,
And leave the faltering feeble souls alive?
The old bees die, the young possess their hive:
Then live, sweet Lucrece, live again, and see
Thy father die, and not thy father thee!

By this starts Collatine as from a dream,
And bids Lucretius give his sorrow place;
And then in key-cold Lucrece' bleeding stream
He falls, and bathes the pale fear in his face,
And counterfeits to die with her a space;
Till manly shame bids him possess his breath,
And live to be revenged on her death.

The deep vexation of his inward soul
Hath serv'd a dumb arrest upon his tongue;
Who, mad that sorrow should his use control,
Or keep him from heart-easing words so long,
Begins to talk; but through his lips do throng
Weak words, so thick come in his poor heart's aid,
That no man could distinguish what he said.

Yet sometime Tarquin was pronounced plain,
But through his teeth, as if the name he tore.
This windy tempest, till it blow up rain,
Held back his sorrow's tide, to make it more;
At last it rains, and busy winds give o'er:
Then son and father weep with equal strife,
Who should weep most for daughter or for wife.

The one doth call her his, the other his,
Yet neither may possess the claim they lay.
The father says, She's mine.—O! mine she is,
Replies her husband: do not take away
My sorrow's interest; let no mourner say
He weeps for her; for she was only mine,
And only must be wail'd by Collatine.

O! quoth Lucretius, I did give that life
Which she too early and too late hath spill'd.[48]
Woe, woe! quoth Collatine, she was my wife;
I ow'd her, and 'tis mine that she hath kill'd.
My daughter! and My wife! with clamours fill'd
The dispers'd air, who, holding Lucrece' life,
Answer'd their cries, My daughter! and My wife!

Brutus, who pluck'd the knife from Lucrece' side
Seeing such emulation in their woe,

[48] Too *late* is too *lately* or too *recently*. — *Ow'd*, second line after, is *own'd*, *possess'd*. H.

Began to clothe his wit in state and pride,
Burying in Lucrece' wound his folly's show
He with the Romans was esteemed so
As silly-jeering idiots are with kings,
For sportive words, and uttering foolish things:

But now he throws that shallow habit by,
Wherein deep policy did him disguise;
And arm'd his long-hid wits advisedly,
To check the tears in Collatinus' eyes.
Thou wronged lord of Rome, quoth he, arise!
Let my unsounded self, suppos'd a fool,
Now set thy long-experienc'd wit to school.

Why, Collatine, is woe the cure for woe?
Do wounds help wounds, or grief help grievous deeds?
Is it revenge to give thyself a blow,
For his foul act by whom thy fair wife bleeds?
Such childish humour from weak minds proceeds,
Thy wretched wife mistook the matter so,
To slay herself, that should have slain her foe.

Courageous Roman, do not steep thy heart
In such relenting dew of lamentations;
But kneel with me, and help to bear thy part,
To rouse our Roman gods with invocations;
That they will suffer these abominations
(Since Rome herself in them doth stand disgrac'd)
By our strong arms from forth her fair streets chas'd.[49]

Now, by the Capitol that we adore,
And by this chaste blood so unjustly stain'd,

[49] The construction is, "that they will suffer these abominations *to be* chased."

By heaven's fair sun that breeds the fat earth's store,
By all our country rights in Rome maintain'd,
And by chaste Lucrece' soul that late complain'd
Her wrongs to us, and by this bloody knife,
We will revenge the death of this true wife.

This said, he struck his hand upon his breast,
And kiss'd the fatal knife to end his vow;
And to his protestation urg'd the rest,
Who, wondering at him, did his words allow:
Then jointly to the ground their knees they bow,
And that deep vow which Brutus made before,
He doth again repeat, and that they swore.

When they had sworn to this advised doom,
They did conclude to bear dead Lucrece thence,
To show her bleeding body thorough Rome,
And so to publish Tarquin's foul offence:
Which being done with speedy diligence,
The Romans plausibly did give consent
To Tarquin's everlasting banishment.[50]

[50] *Plausibly* is with *applause* or with *acclamation.*

INTRODUCTION

TO

THE SONNETS

AND

A LOVER'S COMPLAINT.

A BOOK called SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS" was entered at the Stationers' by Thomas Thorpe, on the 20th of May, 1609. In the course of the same year was issued a small quarto volume of forty leaves, with the following title-page: "Shakespeare's Sonnets. Never before imprinted. At London: By G. Eld for T. T., and are to be sold by William Aspley." The name of Thomas Thorpe in the entry at the Stationers' ascertains him to be the person meant by the initials T. T. in the title-page. It is remarkable that in some copies of the edition of 1609, the title-page has "are to be sold by John Wright, dwelling at Christ Church gate." In all other respects, both the title-pages and the whole printing of the different copies of 1609 are exactly alike; which shows them to be all of one and the same edition. What may have been the cause or purpose of the difference specified, is not known, nor is it of any consequence.

Thorpe stood somewhat eminent in his line of business, and his edition of the Sonnets was accompanied with a bookseller's dedication very quaint and affected both in the style of wording and of printing; the printing being in small capitals with a period after each word, and the wording thus: "To the only begetter of these ensuing Sonnets, Mr. W. H., all happiness, and that eternity promised by our everliving Poet, wisheth the well-wishing adventurer in setting forth, T. T."

There was no other edition of the Sonnets till 1640, when they were republished by Thomas Cotes, but in a totally different order from that of 1609, being cut up, seemingly at random, into seventy four little poems, with a quaint heading to each, and with parts of

The Passionate Pilgrim interspersed. This edition is not regarded as of any authority, save as showing that within twenty-four years after the Poet's death the Sonnets were so far from being thought to have that unity of cause, or purpose, or occasion, which has since been attributed to them, as to be set forth under an arrangement quite incompatible with any such idea.

Our Introduction to the Venus and Adonis quotes a passage from the Wit's Commonwealth of Francis Meres, speaking of the Poet's "sugared Sonnets among his private friends." This ascertains that a portion, at least, of the Sonnets were written, and well known in private circles, before 1598. It naturally infers, also, that they were written on divers occasions and for divers persons, some of them being intended, perhaps, as personal compliments, and others merely as exercises of fancy. Copies of them were most likely multiplied, to some extent, in manuscript; since this would naturally follow both from their intrinsic excellence, and from the favour with which the mention of them by Meres shows them to have been regarded. Probably the author added to the number from time to time after 1598; and as he grew in public distinction and private acquaintance, there would almost needs have been a growing ambition or curiosity among his friends and admirers, to have each as large a collection of these little treasures as they could. What more natural or likely than that, among those to whom, in this course of private circulation, they became known, there should be some one person or more, perhaps of humbler name, who took pride and pleasure in making or procuring transcripts of as many as he could hear of, and thus getting together, if possible, a full set of them?

Two of the Sonnets, as we shall see hereafter, the CXXXVIII. and the CXLIV., were printed, with some variations, as a part of The Passionate Pilgrim in 1599. In the same publication, which was doubtless made ignorantly and without authority, there are also several others, especially the IV., VI., and IX., which, if really Shakespeare's, have as much right to a place among the Sonnets as many that are already there. At all events, the fact of those two being thus detached and appearing by themselves may be fairly held to argue a good deal as to the manner in which the Sonnets were probably written and circulated.

We have seen that Thorpe calls the "Mr. W. H.," to whom he dedicates his edition, "the only begetter of these ensuing Sonnets." The word *begetter* has been commonly understood as meaning the person who was the cause or occasion of the Sonnets being written, and to whom they were originally addressed. The taking of the word in this sense has caused a great deal of controversy, and exercised a vast amount of critical ingenuity, in endeavouring to trace a thread of continuity through the whole series, and to discover the person who had the somewhat equivocal honour of *begetting* or inspiring them. And such, no doubt

is the natural and proper sense of the word; but what it might mean in the mouth of one so anxious, apparently, to speak out of the common way, is a question not so easily settled. That the Sonnets could not, in this sense, have been *all* begotten by *one* person, has to be admitted; for if it be certain that some of them were addressed to a man, it is equally certain that others were addressed to a woman. But the word *begetter* is found to have been sometimes used in the sense of *obtainer* or *procurer;* and such is clearly the only sense which, in Thorpe's affected language, it will bear, consistently with the internal evidence of the Sonnets themselves. As for the theories, therefore, which have mainly grown from taking Thorpe's *only begetter* to mean *only inspirer*, we shall set them all aside, and practically ignore them, as being totally impertinent to the subject. We have not the slightest doubt, that "the only begetter of these ensuing Sonnets" was simply the person who made or procured transcripts of them, and got them all together, either for his own use or for publication, and to whom Thorpe was indebted for his copy of them. The same view is taken by Knight and Collier.

But Thorpe wishes to his Mr. W. H. "that eternity promised by our ever-living Poet." Promised by the Poet to whom? To "Mr. W. H.," or to himself, or to some one else? For aught appears to the contrary, it may be to either one, or perhaps two, of these; for in some of the Sonnets, as the XVIII. and XIX., the Poet promises an eternity of youth and fame both to his verse and to the person he is addressing. Here may be the proper place for remarking, that in a line of the XX., — "A man in hue, all hues in his controlling," — the original prints *hues* in Italic and with a capital, *Hews*, just as *Will* is printed in the CXXXV. and CXXXVI., where the author is evidently playing upon his own name. It was not uncommon for *hues* to be spelt *hews* and printed with a capital, *Hews*. Tyrwhitt, however, conjectured that in this case a play was intended on the name of *Hughes*, and that W. Hughes was the "Mr. W. H." of Thorpe's dedication, and the person addressed in the Sonnets. If the Sonnet in question were meant to be continuous with that which precedes, the Poet certainly perpetrated a very palpable anticlimax in the writing of it. Knight, as will be seen by our notes, groups it along with the LIII., LIV., and LV., as forming a cluster or little poem by themselves. Whether this grouping be right, seems very questionable; but it is barely possible that the XX. and those belonging with it may have been addressed to a personal friend of the Poet's, named W. Hughes, who was the *procurer* of the whole series for publication: we say *barely possible*, and that seems the most that can be said about it.

Great effort has been made, to find in the Sonnets some deeper or other meaning than meets the ear, and to fix upon them, generally, a personal and autobiographical character. It must indeed be owned that there is in several of them an earnestness of tone

and in some few a subdued pathos, which strongly argues them to be expressions of the Poet's real feelings respecting himself, his condition, and the person or persons addressed. This is particularly the case with the series of thirteen, beginning with the CIX. in our numbering, the 72d. Something the same may be said of the XXVI. and the other two which Knight groups with it, in our numbering the 24th, 25th, and 26th, where we find a striking resemblance to some expressions used in the dedications of the Venus and Adonis, and the Lucrece. But, as to the greater part of the Sonnets, we grow more and more persuaded that they were intended mainly as flights or exercises of fancy, thrown into the form of a personal address, and written, it may be, in some cases at the instance or in compliment of the Poet's personal friends, and perhaps mingling an element of personal interest or allusion, merely as a matter of art; whatsoever there is personal in them being thus kept subordinate and incidental to poetical beauty and effect. For example, in the CXXXVIII., than which few have more appearance of being autobiographical, the Poet speaks of himself as being old, and says his "days are past the best;" yet this was printed in 1599, when he was but thirty-five years of age. Surely, in that case, his reason for using such language must have been, that it suited his purpose as a poet, not that it was true of his age as a man.

Much light is thrown on these remarkable effusions by the general style of sonneteering then in vogue, as exemplified in the Sonnets of Spenser, Drayton, and Daniel. In these, too, though unquestionably designed mainly as studies or specimens of art, the authors, while speaking in the form of a personal address, and as if revealing their own actual thoughts and inward history, are continually using language and imagery that clearly had not and could not have any truth or fitness save in reference to their purpose as poets. In proportion to the genius and art of the men, these Sonnets have, as much as Shakespeare's, the appearance of being autobiographical, and of disclosing the true personal sentiments and history of the authors; except, as already mentioned, in some few cases where Wordsworth is probably right in saying of the Sonnet, that "with this key Shakespeare unlock'd his heart." We have spoken of the strong confidence which Shakespeare expresses repeatedly in the Sonnets, that his lines would both possess and confer an eternity of youth and fame. It is remarkable that all three of the other poets named use language of precisely the same import in their Sonnets, and use it repeatedly It seems, indeed, to have been at that time a sort of stereotyped matter in sonnet-writing. Thus in Spenser's 75th Sonnet:

> "My verse your virtues rare shall eternize,
> And in the heavens write your glorious name;
> Where, when as death shall all the world subdue,
> Our love shall live, and later life renew."

And ne has the same thought in at least two other Sonnets. So too, in Drayton s 44th:

> "And though in youth my youth untimely perish.
> To keep thee from oblivion and the grave,
> Ensuing ages yet my rhymes shall cherish,
> Where I entomb'd my better part shall save;
> And though this earthly body fade and die,
> My name shall mount upon eternity."

A similar strain occurs in his 6th. The same promise of eternity is also met with in two of Daniel's. Thus in his 41st:

> "How many live, the glory of whose name
> Shall rest in ice, when thine is grav'd in marble!
> Thou may'st in after ages live esteem'd,
> Unburied in these lines, reserv'd in pureness;
> These shall entomb those eyes that have redeem'd
> Me from the vulgar, thee from all obscureness."

In short, it was a common fashion of the time, in sonnet-writing, for authors to speak in an ideal or imaginary character as if it were their real one, and to attribute to themselves certain thoughts and feelings, merely because it suited their purpose, and was a part of their art as poets, so to do. And this, we make no doubt, is the true key to the mystery which has puzzled so many critics in the Sonnets of Shakespeare. In writing Sonnets, he naturally fell into the current style of the age; only, by how much he surpassed the others in dramatic power, by so much was he better able to express ideal sentiments as if they were his own, and to pass, as it were, out of himself into the characters he had imagined or assumed.

Knight has some remarks on this point, which are so apt and well-put that we cannot forbear quoting them. "It must not be forgotten," says he, "that in an age when the Italian models of poetry were so diligently cultivated, imaginary loves and imaginary jealousies were freely admitted into verses which appeared to address themselves to the reader in the personal character of the poet. Regarding a poem, whether a sonnet or an epic, essentially as a work of *art*, the artist was not careful to separate his own identity from the sentiments and situations which he delineated; any more than the pastoral poets of the next century were solicitous to tell their readers that their Corydons and Phyllises were not absolutely themselves and their mistresses. The *Amoretti* of Spenser, for example, consisting of eighty-eight Sonnets, is also a puzzle to all those who regard such productions as necessarily autobiographical. These poems were published in 1596; in several passages a date is somewhat distinctly marked; for there are lines which refer to the completion of The Faerie Queene, and to Spenser's appointment to the laureateship. And yet they are full

of the complaints of an unrequited love, and of a disdainful mistress, at a period when Spenser was married, and settled with his family in Ireland.

"We believe that, taken as works of art, having a certain degree of continuity, the Sonnets of Spenser, of Daniel, of Drayton, of Shakespeare, although in many instances they might shadow forth real feelings, and be outpourings of the inmost heart, were presented to the world as exercises of fancy, and were received by the world as such. The most usual form which such compositions assumed was that of love-verses. Spenser's *Amoretti* are entirely of this character, as their name implies: Daniel's, which are fifty-seven in number, are all addressed 'To Delia:' Drayton's, which he calls 'Ideas,' are somewhat more miscellaneous in their character. In 1593 was also published 'Licia, or Poems of Love, in honour of the admirable and singular virtues of his Lady.' This book contains fifty-two Sonnets, all conceived in the language of passionate affection and extravagant praise. And yet the author, in his Address to the Reader, says,—'If thou muse what my Licia is, take her to be some Diana, at the least chaste, or some Minerva; no Venus, fairer far. It may be she is Learning's image, or some heavenly wonder, which the precisest may not mislike: perhaps under that name I have shadowed Discipline.' This fashion of sonnet-writing upon a continuous subject prevailed, thus, about the period of the publication of the Venus and Adonis and the Lucrece, when Shakespeare had taken his rank amongst the poets of the time, independent of his dramatic rank."

Taking this view of the matter, we of course do not search after any thread or principle of continuity running through the whole series of Sonnets, or any considerable portion of them. We hold them to have been strictly fragmentary in conception and execution, written at divers times and from various motives; addressed sometimes, perhaps, to actual persons, sometimes to ideal; and, for the most part, weaving together the real and the imaginary sentiments of the author, as would best serve the end of poetical beauty and effect. In a word, we think he wrote them mainly as an artist, not as a man, though as an artist acting more or less upon the incidents and suggestions of his actual experience. Doubtless, too, in divers cases, several of them have a special unity and coherence among themselves, being run together in continuous sets or clusters, and forming separate poems. This avoids the endless mirage of conflicting theories that has gathered about them, and also clears up the perplexity and confusion which one cannot but feel while reading them under an idea or persuasion of their being a continuous whole.

We give the Sonnets, it will be seen, in the same order and arrangement as they stand in the original edition, believing that this ought not to be interfered with, until the question shall be better settled as to the order in which they should be given. Neverthe-

less, we are far from thinking this order to be the right one; on the contrary, we hold it to be in divers particulars very much disordered. It seems quite evident that there is a good deal of misplacement and confusion among them; sometimes those being scattered here and there, which belong together, sometimes one set being broken by the thrusting in of a detached member of another set. For instance, the three Sonnets playing upon the Poet's name clearly ought to be set together, yet they are printed as the CXXXV., CXXXVI., and CXLIII., the last of the trio being thus separated from the rest by the interposition of six jumbled together, apparently, from their proper connection in other sets. So, again, the CXXVII., CXXXI., and CXXXII. clearly ought to stand together, being continuous alike in the subject and in the manner of treating it. Numerous other cases of like dislocation might be cited, but there is no need of dwelling on the matter here, as it will be duly attended to in our notes.

We have no ground for supposing that Thorpe's edition of the Sonnets was made under the supervision or with the sanction of the Poet. The internal evidence all makes against the notion of the author having any hand in getting the work out; and as for external evidence, there is none bearing on the point. We have found, in connection with the plays, abundant proof that Shakespeare's reputation rendered many publishers very eager to grace their establishments with his workmanship. Thorpe did not publish any other of his writings, nor does he anywhere but in this one instance appear in connection with his name. That his issue of the Sonnets was anywise fraudulent or surreptitious, is more than we have any right to say; neither, on the other hand, is there any sign of its having been done with the author's allowance or consent. Probably, as the business was then conducted, a publisher was held justifiable, in law and honour, in catching such matter where and as he could, provided he did not directly interfere with the known interest of anybody else in the same line. And so, as regards the issue in question, perhaps the most that can be said for it is, that it was with the Poet's connivance. The Sonnets were floating about in circulation, and their excellence had become matter of public fame. There was cause enough why a publisher should be glad to come by a copy of them, and perhaps to reward, with compliments or cash, any one who would get together, for his use, as many of them as he could find. "Mr. W. H." probably served in this capacity. And for the order and arrangement of them, there was most likely nothing better than the ignorance or caprice of the procurer or the publisher. It is nowise improbable that some may have been mistakenly included which were not really Shakespeare's, nor, again, that he may have written some which were not obtained.

The whole question of the Sonnets has been sifted and scrutinized with much care and ability in Knight's Shakespeare the

writer endeavouring to sort and arrange them on a principle of internal fitness and congruity. Probably his order is not in all points satisfactory; in one particular, as will be seen, we depart from it, and there are some others where we think it might be bettered: but it seems, at all events, a great improvement on the old disorder; and we would not that the settling of a better arrangement should be hindered by having too many innovations adopted or proposed. While retaining them, therefore, in their old order, we have numbered them with figures, so that they can be read, except in the instance just mentioned, according to Knight's grouping; though in our numbering the several groups or sets do not occupy the same relative places which he assigns them, because we wished the figures to run, as nearly as might be, in the same order as the Sonnets are printed. Along with our figures, we also keep the numerals the same as in the old arrangement; and by following the numerals which we have placed after certain Sonnets or clusters of Sonnets, the reader will be able to take the whole series according to our numbering, and to find the several sets or groups as Knight has sorted and classed them. We know not how it may strike others; but, for ourselves, we have found the interest of them greatly heightened, by having the old confusion thus disciplined out of their arrangement.

Touching the merit of the Sonnets, there need not much be said Some of them would hardly do credit to a school-boy, while many are such as it may well be held an honour even to Shakespeare to have written; there being nothing of the kind in the language at all approaching them, except a few of Milton's and a good many of Wordsworth's. That in these the Poet should have sometimes rendered his work excessively frigid with the euphuistic conceits and affectations of the time, is far less wonderful than the exquisite beauty, and often more than beauty, of sentiment and imagery that distinguishes a large portion of them. Many might be pointed out, which, with perfect clearness and compactness of thought, are resplendent with the highest glories of imagination; others are replete with the tenderest pathos; others again are compact of graceful fancy and airy elegance; while in all these styles there are specimens perfectly steeped in the melody of sounds and numbers, as if the thought were born of music, and the music interfused with its very substance. Wordsworth gives it as his opinion, that "there is no part of the writings of this Poet, where is found, in an equal compass, a greater number of exquisite feelings felicitously expressed."

"A Lover's Complaint, by William Shakespeare," occupies eleven pages at the end of the volume containing the Sonnets. There is no doubt of its being the Poet's work; but on what occasion or for what purpose it was written, is not known Some parts of it are very fine, and all of it is well worth having

SONNETS.

I. 1.

From fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauty's rose might never die,
But as the riper should by time decease,
His tender heir might bear his memory:
But thou, contracted to thine own bright eyes,
Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel,
Making a famine where abundance lies,
Thyself thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel.
Thou that art now the world's fresh ornament,
And only herald to the gaudy spring,
Within thine own bud buriest thy content,
And, tender churl, mak'st waste in niggarding.
Pity the world, or else this glutton be,
To eat the world's due, by the grave and thee.

II. 2.

When forty winters shall besiege thy brow,
And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,
Thy youth's proud livery, so gaz'd on now,
Will be a tatter'd weed, of small worth held:
Then, being ask'd where all thy beauty lies,
Where all the treasure of thy lusty days;
To say, within thine own deep-sunken eyes,
Were an all-eating shame, and thriftless praise.
How much more praise deserv'd thy beauty's use,
If thou could'st answer, "This fair child of mine
Shall sum my count, and make my old excuse"
Proving his beauty by succession thine.

This were to be new-made when thou art old,
And see thy blood warm when thou feel'st it cold.

III. 3.

Look in thy glass, and tell the face thou viewest,
Now is the time that face should form another;
Whose fresh repair if now thou not renewest,
Thou dost beguile the world, unbless some mother,
For where is she so fair, whose unear'd womb[1]
Disdains the tillage of thy husbandry?
Or who is he so fond,[2] will be the tomb
Of his self-love, to stop posterity?
Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee
Calls back the lovely April of her prime:
So thou through windows of thine age shalt see,
Despite of wrinkles, this thy golden time.
But if thou live, remember'd not to be,
Die single, and thine image dies with thee

IV. 4.

Unthrifty loveliness, why dost thou spend
Upon thyself thy beauty's legacy?
Nature's bequest gives nothing, but doth lend;
And, being frank, she lends to those are free.
Then, beauteous niggard, why dost thou abuse
The bounteous largess given thee to give?
Profitless usurer, why dost thou use
So great a sum of sums, yet canst not live?
For, having traffic with thyself alone,
Thou of thyself thy sweet self dost deceive.
Then how, when nature calls thee to be gone,
What acceptable audit canst thou leave?

[1] *Unear'd* is *untilled*. See the dedication of Venus and Adonis, note 2. H.

[2] *Fond* was continually used in the sense of *foolish*. M.

Thy unus'd beauty must be tomb'd with thee,
Which, used, lives th' executor to be.

V. 5.

Those hours, that with gentle work did frame
The lovely gaze where every eye doth dwell,
Will play the tyrants to the very same,
And that unfair,[3] which fairly doth excel:
For never-resting time leads summer on
To hideous winter, and confounds him there;
Sap check'd with frost, and lusty leaves quite gone,
Beauty o'er-snow'd, and bareness every where:
Then, were not summer's distillation left,
A liquid prisoner pent in walls of glass,
Beauty's effect with beauty were bereft,
Nor it, nor no remembrance what it was:
But flowers distill'd, though they with winter meet,
Leese but their show;[4] their substance still lives sweet.

VI. 6.

Then, let not winter's ragged hand deface
In thee thy summer, ere thou be distill'd:
Make sweet some phial; treasure thou some place
With beauty's treasure, ere it be self-kill'd.
That use is not forbidden usury,
Which happies those that pay the willing loan;
That's for thyself to breed another thee,
Or ten times happier, be it ten for one:
Ten times thyself were happier than thou art,
If ten of thine ten times refigur'd thee.
Then, what could death do, if thou should'st depart,
Leaving thee living in posterity?

[3] *Unfair* is here a verb, having the force of *make unfair*. H.
[4] *Leese* is an old form of *lose*. H.

Be not self-will'd; for thou art much too fair
To be death's conquest, and make worms thine heir

VII. 7.

Lo! in the orient when the gracious light
Lifts up his burning head, each under eye
Doth homage to his new-appearing sight,
Serving with looks his sacred majesty;
And, having climb'd the steep-up heavenly hill,
Resembling strong youth in his middle age,
Yet mortal looks adore his beauty still,
Attending on his golden pilgrimage:
But when from highmost pitch, with weary car,
Like feeble age he reeleth from the day,
The eyes, 'fore duteous, now converted are
From his low tract, and look another way.
So thou, thyself outgoing in thy noon,
Unlook'd-on diest, unless thou get a son.

VIII. 8.

Music to hear,[5] why hear'st thou music sadly?
Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy.
Why lov'st thou that which thou receiv'st not gladly
Or else receiv'st with pleasure thine annoy?
If the true concord of well-tuned sounds,
By unions married, do offend thine ear,
They do but sweetly chide thee, who confounds
In singleness the parts that thou should'st bear.
Mark, how one string, sweet husband to another,
Strikes each in each by mutual ordering;
Resembling sire and child and happy mother,
Who, all in one, one pleasing note do sing:
Whose speechless song, being many, seeming one,
Sings this to thee: "Thou single wilt prove none."

[5] That is, "*thou being* music to hear."

IX. 9.

Is it for fear to wet a widow's eye,
That thou consum'st thyself in single life?
Ah! if thou issueless shalt hap to die,
The world will wail thee, like a makeless wife;
The world will be thy widow, and still weep,
That thou no form of thee hast left behind,
When every private widow well may keep,
By children's eyes, her husband's shape in mind.
Look, what an unthrift in the world doth spend,
Shifts but his place, for still the world enjoys it;
But beauty's waste hath in the world an end,
And, kept unus'd, the user so destroys it.
No love toward others in that bosom sits,
That on himself such murderous shame commits

X. 10.

For shame! deny that thou bear'st love to any,
Who for thyself art so unprovident:
Grant, if thou wilt, thou art belov'd of many,
But that thou none lov'st, is most evident;
For thou art so possess'd with murderous hate,
That 'gainst thyself thou stick'st not to conspire,
Seeking that beauteous roof to ruinate,
Which to repair should be thy chief desire.
O, change thy thought, that I may change my mind!
Shall hate be fairer lodg'd than gentle love?
Be, as thy presence is, gracious and kind,
Or to thyself at least kind-hearted prove:
Make thee another self, for love of me,
That beauty still may live in thine or thee.

[6] That is, *mateless*. *Make* and *mate* were formerly synonymous.

XI. 11.

As fast as thou shalt wane, so fast thou growest
In one of thine, from that which thou departest;
And that fresh blood, which youngly thou bestowest,
Thou may'st call thine, when thou from youth convertest.
Herein lives wisdom, beauty, and increase;
Without this, folly, age, and cold decay:
If all were minded so, the times should cease,
And threescore years would make the world away
Let those, whom nature hath not made for store,
Harsh, featureless, and rude, barrenly perish:
Look, whom she best endow'd, she gave the more;
Which bounteous gift thou should'st in bounty cherish.
She carv'd thee for her seal, and meant thereby,
Thou should'st print more, nor let that copy die.

XII. 12.

When I do count the clock that tells the time,
And see the brave day sunk in hideous night;
When I behold the violet past prime,
And sable curls all silver'd o'er with white;
When lofty trees I see barren of leaves,
Which erst from heat did canopy the herd;
And summer's green all girded up in sheaves,
Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard;
Then of thy beauty do I question make,
That thou among the wastes of time must go,
Since sweets and beauties do themselves forsake,
And die as fast as they see others grow;
And nothing 'gainst time's scythe can make defence,
Save breed, to brave him when he takes thee hence.

XIII. 13.

O, that you were yourself! but, love, you are
No longer yours than you yourself here live:
Against this coming end you should prepare,
And your sweet semblance to some other give:
So should that beauty, which you hold in lease,
Find no determination: then you were
Yourself again, after yourself's decease,
When your sweet issue your sweet form should bear
Who lets so fair a house fall to decay,
Which husbandry in honour might uphold
Against the stormy gusts of winter's day,
And barren rage of death's eternal cold?
O! none but unthrifts. Dear my love, you know
You had a father; let your son say so.

XIV. 14.

Not from the stars do I my judgment pluck;
And yet, methinks, I have astronomy,
But not to tell of good or evil luck,
Of plagues, of dearths, or seasons' quality;
Nor can I fortune to brief minutes tell,
Pointing to each his thunder, rain, and wind;
Or say, with princes if it shall go well,
By oft predict that I in heaven find:[7]
But from thine eyes my knowledge I derive;
And, constant stars, in them I read such art,
As truth and beauty shall together thrive,
If from thyself to store thou would'st convert;
Or else of thee this I prognosticate,—
Thy end is truth's and beauty's doom and date.

[7] *Oft predict* is *frequent prediction.*

XV. 1b.

When I consider, every thing that grows
Holds in perfection but a little moment;
That this huge stage presenteth nought but shows,
Whereon the stars in secret influence comment;
When I perceive that men as plants increase,
Cheered and check'd even by the self-same sky,
Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease,
And wear their brave state out of memory;
Then the conceit of this inconstant stay
Sets you most rich in youth before my sight,
Where wasteful time debateth with decay,
To change your day of youth to sullied night;
And, all in war with time, for love of you,
As he takes from you, I engraft you new

XVI. 16.

But wherefore do not you a mightier way
Make war upon this bloody tyrant, Time,
And fortify yourself in your decay
With means more blessed than my barren rhyme?
Now stand you on the top of happy hours;
And many maiden gardens, yet unset,
With virtuous wish would bear your living flowers,
Much liker than your painted counterfeit:
So should the lines of life that life repair,
Which this, time's pencil, or my pupil pen,
Neither in inward worth nor outward fair,[8]
Can make you live yourself in eyes of men.
To give away yourself, keeps yourself still;
And you must live, drawn by your own sweet skill

[8] The Poet very often uses *fair* for *fairness* or *beauty*. B.

XVII. 17.

Who will believe my verse in time to come,
If it were fill'd with your most high deserts?
Though yet, Heaven knows, it is but as a tomb,
Which hides your life, and shows not half your parts.
If I could write the beauty of your eyes,
And in fresh numbers number all your graces,
The age to come would say, "This poet lies;
Such heavenly touches ne'er touch'd earthly faces."
So should my papers, yellow'd with their age,
Be scorn'd, like old men of less truth than tongue;
And your true rights be term'd a poet's rage,
And stretched metre of an antique song:
But were some child of yours alive that time,
You should live twice, — in it, and in my rhyme.

XX.*

XVIII. 21.†

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:

* By following the numerals thus placed after certain Sonnets, the reader will take the whole collection in the order of our numbering.

† We here depart, in one particular, from Knight's classification of the Sonnets. He makes the series, wherein the Poet exhorts his friend to marry, to close with the XIX., and then arranges the XX., LIII., LIV., and LV. in a cluster or little poem by themselves. It seems to us tolerably clear that the four just pointed out are addressed to the same person, whether actual or ideal, as the first nineteen, and therefore ought to be grouped with them. They are conceived in much the same vein of sentiment and imagery, and seem evidently intended to keep up and carry on the style of the foregoing, in running a sort of division or variation upon the same thoughts or ideas. We thus make the series to consist of twenty-three Sonnets, instead of nineteen. It will be seen that we change the relative positions of the last five in the series. This is done in order to avoid the very obvious and awkward anticlimax which we find in passing from the XIX. to the XX., and also to preserve an easy and gradual rising from the XVII. to the close

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date.
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometimes declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou growest.
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

LV.

XIX. 23.

Devouring Time, blunt thou the lion's paws,
And make the earth devour her own sweet brood;
Pluck the keen teeth from the fierce tiger's jaws,
And burn the long-liv'd phœnix in her blood:
Make glad and sorry seasons, as thou fleet'st,
And do whate'er thou wilt, swift-footed Time,
To the wide world, and all her fading sweets;
But I forbid thee one most heinous crime:
O! carve not with thy hours my love's fair brow,
Nor draw no lines there with thine antique pen;
Him in thy course untainted do allow,
For beauty's pattern to succeeding men.
Yet, do thy worst, old Time: despite thy wrong,
My love shall in my verse ever live young.[9]

XXVI.

[9] It may be needful to add, that in Shakespeare's time, as is often shown in his plays, the language of friendship was much the same as that of love. So that, in speaking to or of his male friends with a degree of passionate ardour, such as a gentleman would now hardly venture upon using to or about his lady-love the Poet was but doing a common thing. H.

XX. 18*

A woman's face, with nature's own hand painted,
Hast thou, the master-mistress of my passion;
A woman's gentle heart, but not acquainted
With shifting change, as is false women's fashion;
An eye more bright than theirs, less false in rolling
Gilding the object whereupon it gazeth;
A man in hue, all hues in his controlling,[10]
Which steals men's eyes, and women's souls amazeth;
And for a woman wert thou first created;
Till Nature, as she wrought thee, fell a-doting,
And by addition me of thee defeated,
By adding one thing to my purpose nothing.
But, since she prick'd thee out for women's pleasure,
Mine be thy love, and thy love's use their treasure.

LIII.

XXI. 90†

So is it not with me, as with that Muse
Stirr'd by a painted beauty to his verse,
Who heaven itself for ornament doth use,
And every fair with his fair doth rehearse;
Making a couplement of proud compare,
With sun and moon, with earth and sea's rich gems,
With April's first-born flowers, and all things rare
That heaven's air in this huge rondure hems.
O! let me, true in love, but truly write;
And then, believe me, my love is as fair

* In our arrangement, this Sonnet follows the XVII., and the preceding does not come in till after the LV. See notes on page 131.

† In Knight's classification, this Sonnet comes in after the CXXX., and is followed, in our numbering, by the CXXXIX.

[10] In the original, *hues* is spelt with a capital, *Hews*. From t is slight circumstance Tyrwhitt conjectured that "the begetter of these Sonnets" was a Mr. W. Hughes. The question is dis cssed in our Introduction. H.

As any mother's child, though not so bright
As those gold candles fix'd in heaven's air.
Let them say more that like of hear-say well;
I will not praise, that purpose not to sell.

CXXXIX.

XXII. 110*

My glass shall not persuade me I am old,
So long as youth and thou are of one date;
But when in thee time's furrows I behold,
Then look I death my days should expirate.
For all that beauty that doth cover thee
Is but the seemly raiment of my heart,
Which in thy breast doth live, as thine in me.
How can I, then, be elder than thou art?
O! therefore, love, be of thyself so wary,
As I not for myself but for thee will;
Bearing thy heart, which I will keep so chary
As tender nurse her babe from faring ill.
Presume not on thy heart when mine is slain;
Thou gav'st me thine, not to give back again.

LXII.

XXIII. 26†

As an unperfect actor on the stage,
Who with his fear is put besides his part;
Or some fierce thing replete with too much rage,
Whose strength's abundance weakens his own heart

* Knight arranges this Sonnet as in continuation of the CXXVI.

† This Sonnet, in Knight's order, follows the XXV., in a set of three, entitled "Dedications."

[11] A similar instance of *expiate* occurs in King Richard III., Act iii. sc. 3: "Make haste, the hour of death is *expiate*." It is thought by some to be in both places a misprint for *expirate*; which seems not unlikely, as the latter gives the sense required by the context.

So I, for fear of trust, forget to say
The perfect ceremony of love's rite;
And in mine own love's strength seem to decay,
O'ercharg'd with burden of mine own love's might.
O! let my books be, then, the eloquence
And dumb presagers of my speaking breast;
Who plead for love, and look for recompense,
More than that tongue that more hath more ex-
press'd.
O! learn to read what silent love hath writ:
To hear with eyes belongs to love's fine wit.

XXIX.

XXIV. 53*

Mine eye hath play'd the painter, and hath stell'd
Thy beauty's form in table of my heart;[12]
My body is the frame wherein 'tis held,
And perspective it is best painter's art;
For through the painter must you see his skill,
To find where your true image pictur'd lies;
Which in my bosom's shop is hanging still,
That hath his windows glazed with thine eyes.
Now, see what good turns eyes for eyes have done:
Mine eyes have drawn thy shape, and thine for me
Are windows to my breast, wherethrough the sun
Delights to peep, to gaze therein on thee;
Yet eyes this cunning want, to grace their art,—
They draw but what they see, know not the heart.

XLVI.

* This Sonnet, in Knight's order, follows the XCII., and is classed along with the XLVI. and XLVII., as forming a little poem called "The Picture."

[12] *Table* was used for that whereon any thing was engraved or painted; hence, sometimes, for the picture itself, as in a passage of North's Plutarch, quoted in the remarks on Portia in our Introduction to Julius Cæsar.—In Lucrece, note 43, we have *stell'd* in the same sense as it bears here. In this place, the old copies spell the word *steel'd*; but as it is meant to rhyme with *held*, there can be no doubt that *stell'd* is the right form.

XXV. 25.*

Let those who are in favour with their stars
Of public honour and proud titles boast,
Whilst I, whom fortune of such triumph bars,
Unlook'd-for joy in that I honour most.
Great princes' favourites their fair leaves spread,
But as the marigold at the sun's eye,
And in themselves their pride lies buried;
For at a frown they in their glory die.
The painful warrior famoused for fight,[13]
After a thousand victories once foil'd,
Is from the book of honour razed quite,
And all the rest forgot for which he toil'd:
Then, happy I, that love and am belov'd,
Where I may not remove, nor be remov'd.

XXIII.

XXVI. 24.†

Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage
Thy merit hath my duty strongly knit,
To thee I send this written embassage,
To witness duty, not to show my wit:
Duty so great, which wit so poor as mine
May make seem bare, in wanting words to show it,
But that I hope some good conceit of thine
In thy soul's thought, all naked, will bestow it;
Till whatsoever star that guides my moving,
Points on me graciously with fair aspect,

* Knight makes this Sonnet follow the XXVI., in the set of "Dedications."

† This Sonnet is classed by Knight as the first in a trio of Dedications, the other two being the XXV. and XXIII.

[13] The original has *worth* instead of *fight*, which latter is evidently required for the rhyme. Theobald made the correction. H.

And puts apparel on my tatter'd loving,
To show me worthy of thy sweet respect:
Then may I dare to boast how I do love thee;
Till then, not show my head where thou may'st
prove me. XXV

XXVII. 38.*

Weary with toil I haste me to my bed,
The dear repose for limbs with travel tir'd;
But then begins a journey in my head,
To work my mind when body's work's expir'd:
For then my thoughts (from far where I abide)
Intend a zealous pilgrimage to thee,
And keep my drooping eye-lids open wide,
Looking on darkness which the blind do see;
Save that my soul's imaginary sight
Presents thy shadow to my sightless view,
Which, like a jewel hung in ghastly night,
Makes black night beauteous, and her old face new
Lo! thus, by day my limbs, by night my mind,
For thee, and for myself, no quiet find.

XXVIII. 39

How can I, then, return in happy plight,
That am debarr'd the benefit of rest;
When day's oppression is not eas'd by night,
But day by night, and night by day oppress'd?
And each, though enemies to either's reign,
Do in consent shake hands to torture me;
The one by toil, the other to complain
How far I toil, still further off from thee.

* This Sonnet and the next are arranged by Knight in continuation of the LII., in a set of nine, entitled "Absence." The series begins with the L.

I tell the day, to please him, thou art bright,
And dost him grace when clouds do blot the heaven
So flatter I the swart-complexion'd night,
When sparkling stars twire not,[14] thou gild'st the even:
But day doth daily draw my sorrows longer,
And night doth nightly make grief's strength seem stronger. LXI.

XXIX. 27.*

When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself, and curse my fate;
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featur'd like him, like him with friends possess'd,
Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising;
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate:
For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings,
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

XXX. 28.

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,

* Knight makes this Sonnet the first in a series of four, with the title of "Confiding Friendship." The other three follow in due order. In our figuring the set comes next after the XXIII.

[14] It seems uncertain whether *twire* is here used in the sense of *twinkle* or of *peep*; probably the latter. Thus in Jonson's Sad Shepherd, Act ii. sc. 1: "Which maids will *twire* at 'tween their fingers." And in Beaumont and Fletcher's Women Pleased, Act iv. sc. 1: "I saw the wench that *twired* and twinkled at thee; the wench that's new come hither, the young smug wench." H

I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste
Then can I drown an eye, unus'd to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long-since cancell'd woe,
And moan th' expense of many a vanish'd sight.
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,
Which I new pay as if not paid before:
But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restor'd, and sorrows end.

XXXI. 29.

Thy bosom is endeared with all hearts,
Which I by lacking have supposed dead;
And there reigns love, and all love's loving parts,
And all those friends which I thought buried.
How many a holy and obsequious tear [15]
Hath dear-religious love stol'n from mine eye,
As interest of the dead, which now appear
But things remov'd, that hidden in thee lie!
Thou art the grave where buried love doth live,
Hung with the trophies of my lovers gone,
Who all their parts of me to thee did give;
That due of many now is thine alone.
Their images I lov'd I view in thee;
And thou, all they, hast all the all of me.

XXXII. 30.

If thou survive my well-contented day,
When that churl death my bones with dust shall cover,

[15] *Obsequious* here means *funereal* or relating to *obsequies*. The Poet several times has the word in this sense. See King Richard III., Act i. sc. 2. note 1. E.

And shalt by fortune once more re-survey
These poor rude lines of thy deceased lover;
Compare them with the bettering of the time;
And though they be outstripp'd by every pen,
Reserve them for my love, not for their rhyme,
Exceeded by the height of happier men.
O! then vouchsafe me but this loving thought:
"Had my friend's Muse grown with this growing age,
A dearer birth than this his love had brought,
To march in ranks of better equipage:
But since he died, and poets better prove,
Theirs for their style I'll read, his for his love."

XXXVI.

XXXIII. 138.*

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain tops with sovereign eye,
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy;
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride
With ugly rack on his celestial face,[16]
And from the forlorn world his visage hide,
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace.
Even so my sun one early morn did shine,
With all-triumphant splendour on my brow;
But, out, alack! he was but one hour mine;
The region cloud hath mask'd him from me now.
Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth;
Suns of the world may stain, when heaven's sun staineth.

* Knight arranges this Sonnet and the next two in a series of six, entitled "Injury." In our figuring, it follows the CXLIV.

[16] *Rack* is thin, attenuated vapour; explained in The Tempest Act iv. sc. 1, note 16.

XXXIV. 139.

Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day,
And make me travel forth without my cloak,
To let base clouds o'ertake me in my way,
Hiding thy bravery in their rotten smoke?
'Tis not enough that through the cloud thou break,
To dry the rain on my storm-beaten face;
For no man well of such a salve can speak,
That heals the wound, and cures not the disgrace:
Nor can thy shame give physic to my grief;
Though thou repent, yet I have still the loss:
Th' offender's sorrow lends but weak relief
To him that bears the strong offence's cross.[17]
Ah! but those tears are pearl which thy love sheds,
And they are rich, and ransom all ill deeds.

XXXV. 140.*

No more be griev'd at that which thou hast done:
Roses have thorns, and silver fountains mud;
Clouds and eclipses stain both moon and sun,
And loathsome canker lives in sweetest bud.
All men make faults, and even I in this,
Authorizing thy trespass with compare;
Myself corrupting, salving thy amiss,[18]
Excusing thy sins more than thy sins are:[19]
For to thy sensual fault I bring in sense,

* The remaining Sonnets in this series of six, as arranged by Knight, are the XL., XLI., and XLII.

[17] Instead of *cross*, the old copy here repeats *loss*. Malone made the change. H.

[18] *Amiss* was sometimes used as a substantive, for any thing done amiss. See Venus and Adonis, note 1. H.

[19] That is, making the excuse too great for the offence. — The meaning of the next three lines seems to be, "I bring in my reason to excuse thy fault, and to commence a plea against myself for being as much in fault as thou." H.

(Thy adverse party is thy advocate,)
And 'gainst myself a lawful plea commence.
Such civil war is in my love and hate,
That I an accessory needs must be
To that sweet thief, which sourly robs from me.

XL.

XXXVI. 31.*

Let me confess that we two must be twain,
Although our undivided loves are one:
So shall those blots that do with me remain,
Without thy help, by me be borne alone.
In our two loves there is but one respect,
Though in our lives a separable spite;[20]
Which though it alter not love's sole effect,
Yet doth it steal sweet hours from love's delight.
I may not evermore acknowledge thee,
Lest my bewailed guilt should do thee shame;
Nor thou with public kindness honour me,
Unless thou take that honour from thy name:
But do not so; I love thee in such sort,
As, thou being mine, mine is thy good report.

XXXVII. 32.

As a decrepit father takes delight
To see his active child do deeds of youth,
So I, made lame by fortune's dearest spite,[21]
Take all my comfort of thy worth and truth;

* This and the next three Sonnets are in Knight's arrangement a series by themselves, entitled "Humility." In our figuring, they follow the XXXII.

[20] That is, a cruel fate, that spitefully separates us.

[21] The Poet often uses *dear* as an epithet of any thing that moves intense feeling, whether of love or the reverse. See Twelfth Night, Act v. sc. 1, note 3. H.

For whether beauty, birth, or wealth, or wit,
Or any of these all, or all, or more,
Entitled in thy parts[22] do crowned sit,
I make my love engrafted to this store:
So then I am not lame, poor, nor despis'd,
Whilst that this shadow doth such substance give
That I in thy abundance am suffic'd,
And by a part of all thy glory live.
Look, what is best, that best I wish in thee:
This wish I have; then, ten times happy me

XXXVIII. 33.

How can my Muse want subject to invent,
While thou dost breathe, that pour'st into my verse
Thine own sweet argument, too excellent
For every vulgar paper to rehearse?
O! give thyself the thanks, if aught in me,
Worthy perusal, stand against thy sight;
For who's so dumb that cannot write to thee,
When thou thyself dost give invention light?
Be thou the tenth Muse, ten times more in worth
Than those old nine which rhymers invocate;
And he that calls on thee, let him bring forth
Eternal numbers to outlive long date.
If my slight Muse do please these curious days,
The pain be mine, but thine shall be the praise.

XXXIX. 34.*

O! how thy worth with manners may I sing,
When thou art all the better part of me?
What can mine own praise to mine own self bring?
And what is't but mine own, when I praise thee?

* This Sonnet is the fourth and last in Knight's series on "Humility."

[22] The meaning seems to be, "*ennobled* in thy parts." H.

Even for this let us divided live,
And our dear love lose name of single one;
That by this separation I may give
That due to thee which thou deserv'st alone.
O absence! what a torment would'st thou prove,
Were it not thy sour leisure gave sweet leave
To entertain the time with thoughts of love,
Which time and thoughts so sweetly doth deceive;
And that thou teachest how to make one twain,
By praising him here, who doth hence remain.

L.

XL. 141.*

Take all my loves, my love; yea, take them all:
What hast thou then more than thou hadst before?
No love, my love, that thou may'st true love call:
All mine was thine before thou hadst this more.
Then, if for my love thou my love receivest,
I cannot blame thee, for my love thou usest;
But yet be blam'd, if thou thyself deceivest
By wilful taste of what thyself refusest.
I do forgive thy robbery, gentle thief,
Although thou steal thee all my poverty;
And yet love knows, it is a greater grief
To bear love's wrong, than hate's known injury.
Lascivious grace, in whom all ill well shows,
Kill me with spites; yet we must not be foes.

XLI. 142.

Those petty wrongs that liberty commits,
When I am sometime absent from thy heart,
Thy beauty and thy years full well befits,
For still temptation follows where thou art.

* This Sonnet and the next two are classed by Knight as in continuation of the XXXV., in the series on "Injury."

Gentle thou art, and therefore to be won;
Beauteous thou art, therefore to be assail'd;
And when a woman wooes, what woman's son
Will sourly leave her till she have prevail'd?
Ah me! but yet thou might'st my seat forbear,
And chide thy beauty and thy straying youth,
Who lead thee in their riot even there
Where thou art forc'd to break a twofold truth;
Hers, by thy beauty tempting her to thee,
Thine, by thy beauty being false to me.

XLII. 143.*

That thou hast her, it is not all my grief;
And yet it may be said I lov'd her dearly:
That she hath thee, is of my wailing chief;
A loss in love that touches me more nearly.
Loving offenders, thus I will excuse ye:
Thou dost love her, because thou know'st I love her,
And for my sake even so doth she abuse me,
Suffering my friend for my sake to approve her.
If I lose thee, my loss is my love's gain;
And losing her, my friend hath found that loss;
Both find each other, and I lose both twain,
And both for my sake lay on me this cross.
But here's the joy, my friend and I are one:
Sweet flattery! then, she loves but me alone.

XCIV

XLIII. 41.†

When most I wink, then do mine eyes best see,
For all the day they view things unrespected;

* This Sonnet finishes Knight's series of six on "Injury."

† This and the next two Sonnets are placed by Knight in continuation of the LXI., in the series of nine, entitled "Absence," and beginning with the L.

But when I sleep, in dreams they look on thee,
And, darkly bright, are bright in dark directed.
Then thou, whose shadow shadows doth make bright,
How would thy shadow's form form happy show
To the clear day with thy much clearer light,
When to unseeing eyes thy shade shines so?
How would, I say, mine eyes be blessed made
By looking on thee in the living day,
When in dead night thy fair imperfect shade
Through heavy sleep on sightless eyes doth stay?
All days are nights to see, till I see thee,
And nights bright days, when dreams do show thee me.

XLIV. 42.

If the dull substance of my flesh were thought,
Injurious distance should not stop my way;
For then, despite of space, I would be brought
From limits far remote where thou dost stay.
No matter then, although my foot did stand
Upon the farthest earth remov'd from thee;
For nimble thought can jump both sea and land,
As soon as think the place where he would be.
But, ah! thought kills me, that I am not thought,
To leap large lengths of miles when thou art gone
But that, so much of earth and water wrought,
I must attend time's leisure with my moan;
Receiving nought, by elements so slow,
But heavy tears, badges of either's woe.[23]

[23] The Poet here has in view the old doctrine of philosophy that all things were composed of the four elements, earth, water air, and fire. See our Introduction to Julius Cæsar. H.

XLV. 43.*

The other two, slight air and purging fire,
Are both with thee, wherever I abide;
The first my thought, the other my desire,
These present-absent with swift motion slide:
For when these quicker elements are gone
In tender embassy of love to thee,
My life, being made of four, with two alone
Sinks down to death, oppress'd with melancholy;
Until life's composition be recur'd
By those swift messengers return'd from thee,
Who even but now come back again, assur'd
Of thy fair health, recounting it to me:
This told, I joy; but then, no longer glad,
I send them back again, and straight grow sad.

XLVIII.

XLVI. 54.†

Mine eye and heart are at a mortal war,
How to divide the conquest of thy sight;
Mine eye my heart thy picture's sight would bar,
My heart mine eye the freedom of that right.
My heart doth plead, that thou in him dost lie,
A closet never pierc'd with crystal eyes;
But the defendant doth that plea deny,
And says in him thy fair appearance lies.
To 'cide this title is impannelled
A quest of thoughts,[24] all tenants to the heart;

* This Sonnet closes Knight's series of nine beginning with the L., and entitled "Absence."

† Knight places this Sonnet and the next in continuation of the XXIV., in "The Picture."

[24] That is, to *decide* this title an *inquest* or *jury* of thoughts is impannelled. — We have repeatedly seen that *moiety* was used for any part of a thing. So in the dedication of Lucrece, note 1.

E.

And by their verdict is determined
The clear eye's moiety, and the dear heart's part
As thus,—Mine eye's due is thine outward part,
And my heart's right thine inward love of heart.

XLVII. 55.*

Betwixt mine eye and heart a league is took,
And each doth good turns now unto the other:
When that mine eye is famish'd for a look,
Or heart in love with sighs himself doth smother,
With my love's picture then my eye doth feast,
And to the painted banquet bids my heart;
Another time mine eye is my heart's guest,
And in his thoughts of love doth share a part:
So, either by thy picture or my love,
Thyself away art present still with me;
For thou not further than my thoughts canst move,
And I am still with them, and they with thee;
Or, if they sleep, thy picture in my sight
Awakes my heart to heart's and eye's delight.

LXXVII.

XLVIII. 44.†

How careful was I, when I took my way,
Each trifle under truest bars to thrust;
That to my use it might unused stay
From hands of falsehood, in sure wards of trust!
But thou, to whom my jewels trifles are,
Most worthy comfort, now my greatest grief,
Thou, best of dearest, and mine only care,
Art left the prey of every vulgar thief.

* This Sonnet closes Knight's series of three, beginning with the XXIV., and called "The Picture."

† Knight makes this Sonnet the first in a series of nine, entitled "Estrangement."

Thee have I not lock'd up in any chest,
Save where thou art not, though I feel thou art,
Within the gentle closure of my breast,
From whence at pleasure thou may'st come and part;
And even thence thou wilt be stol'n, I fear,
For truth proves thievish for a prize so dear.

LXXV

XLIX. 46.*

Against that time, if ever that time come,
When I shall see thee frown on my defects,
Whenas thy love hath cast his utmost sum,
Call'd to that audit by advis'd respects;
Against that time, when thou shalt strangely pass,
And scarcely greet me with that sun, thine eye;
When love, converted from the thing it was,
Shall reasons find of settled gravity;—
Against that time do I ensconce me here
Within the knowledge of mine own desert,
And this my hand against myself uprear,
To guard the lawful reasons on thy part:
To leave poor me thou hast the strength of laws,
Since, why to love, I can allege no cause.

LXXXVIII.

L. 35.†

How heavy do I journey on the way,
When what I seek (my weary travels' end)
Doth teach that ease and that repose to say,
"Thus far the miles are measur'd from thy friend!"
The beast that bears me, tired with my woe,
Plods dully on, to bear that weight in me;

* Knight makes this Sonnet continuate with the LXXV., in the series on "Estrangement," beginning with the XLVIII.

† This Sonnet is placed by Knight as the first in the series of nine, entitled "Absence."

As if by some instinct the wretch did know
His rider lov'd not speed, being made from thee.
The bloody spur cannot provoke him on,
That sometimes anger thrusts into his hide,
Which heavily he answers with a groan,
More sharp to me than spurring to his side;
For that same groan doth put this in my mind,—
My grief lies onward, and my joy behind.

LI. 36.

Thus can my love excuse the slow offence
Of my dull bearer, when from thee I speed:
From where thou art why should I haste me thence?
Till I return, of posting is no need.
O! what excuse will my poor beast then find,
When swift extremity can seem but slow?
Then should I spur, though mounted on the wind;
In winged speed no motion shall I know:
Then can no horse with my desire keep pace;
Therefore desire, of perfect'st love being made,
Shall neigh (no dull flesh) in his fiery race;
But love, for love, thus shall excuse my jade:
Since from thee going he went wilful-slow,
Towards thee I'll run, and give him leave to go.

LII. 37.

So am I as the rich, whose blessed key
Can bring him to his sweet up-locked treasure,
The which he will not every hour survey,
For blunting the fine point of seldom pleasure.
Therefore are feasts so solemn and so rare,
Since seldom coming, in the long year set,

Like stones of worth they thinly placed are,
Or captain jewels in the carcanet.[25]
So is the time that keeps you, as my chest,
Or as the wardrobe which the robe doth hide,
To make some special instant special-bless'd,
By new unfolding his imprison'd pride.
Blessed are you, whose worthiness gives scope,
Being had, to triumph, being lack'd, to hope.

XXVII.

LIII. 19.*

What is your substance, whereof are you made,
That millions of strange shadows on you tend?
Since every one hath, every one, one shade;
And you, but one, can every shadow lend.
Describe Adonis, and the counterfeit
Is poorly imitated after you;
On Helen's cheek all art of beauty set,
And you in Grecian tires are painted new:
Speak of the spring, and foison of the year,[26]
The one doth shadow of your beauty show,
The other as your bounty doth appear,
And you in every blessed shape we know.
In all external grace you have some part;
But you like none, none you, for constant heart.

LIV. 20.

O! how much more doth beauty beauteous seem,
By that sweet ornament which truth doth give!

* In our arrangement, this Sonnet and the next are made continuate with the XL. in the series of twenty-three, wherein the Poe advises his friend to marry. See notes on page 131.

[25] *Captain* is *chief* or *principal*. A *carcanet* is a necklace See The Comedy of Errors, Act iii. sc. 1, note 1. H.

[26] *Foison* is *plenty*, or *abundance*

The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem
For that sweet odour which doth in it live.
The canker-blooms have full as deep a die,[27]
As the perfumed tincture of the roses;
Hang on such thorns, and play as wantonly,
When summer's breath their masked buds discloses:
But, for their virtue only is their show,
They live unwoo'd, and unrespected fade;
Die to themselves. Sweet roses do not so;
Of their sweet deaths are sweetest odours made:
And so of you, beauteous and lovely youth,
When that shall fade, my verse distils your truth.

XVIII.

LV. 22.*

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme;
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone, besmear'd with sluttish time.
When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn
The living record of your memory.
'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room,
Even in the eyes of all posterity,
That wear this world out to the ending doom.
So, till the judgment that yourself arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

XIX.

* In our arrangement, this Sonnet follows the XVIII., as part of the series wherein the Poet urges upon his friend divers reasons for marrying. See notes on page 131.

[27] *Canker-blooms* are the blossoms of the canker-rose or dog-rose. See 1 Henry IV., Act i. sc. 3, note 17.

LVI. 96.*

Sweet love, renew thy force; be it not said,
Thy edge should blunter be than appetite,
Which but to-day by feeding is allay'd,
To-morrow sharpen'd in his former might:
So, love, be thou; although to-day thou fill
Thy hungry eyes, even till they wink with fulness,
To-morrow see again, and do not kill
The spirit of love with a perpetual dulness.
Let this sad interim like the ocean be
Which parts the shore, where two contracted-new
Come daily to the banks, that, when they see
Return of love, more bless'd may be the view:
Or call it winter, which, being full of care,
Makes summer's welcome thrice more wish'd, more rare.

CXLV.

LVII. 94.†

Being your slave, what should I do but tend
Upon the hours and times of your desire?
I have no precious time at all to spend,
Nor services to do, till you require.
Nor dare I chide the world-without-end hour,[28]
Whilst I, my sovereign, watch the clock for you:
Nor think the bitterness of absence sour,
When you have bid your servant once adieu:
Nor dare I question with my jealous thought
Where you may be, or your affairs suppose;

* This Sonnet is regarded by Knight as standing alone, and having "Coldness" for its subject. In our figuring, it follows the LVIII.

† This Sonnet and the next are regarded by Knight as standing together alone, and having "Slavery" for their subject. In our numbering they follow the CXLIX.

[28] That is, the tedious hour that seems as if it never would end

But, like a sad slave, stay and think of nought,
Save, where you are, how happy you make those.
So true a fool is love, that in your will,
Though you do any thing, he thinks no ill.

LVIII. 95.

That God forbid, that made me first your slave,
I should in thought control your times of pleasure
Or at your hand th' account of hours to crave,
Being your vassal, bound to stay your leisure!
O! let me suffer, being at your beck,
Th' imprison'd absence of your liberty;
And patience, tame to sufferance, bide each check,
Without accusing you of injury.
Be where you list, your charter is so strong,
That you yourself may privilege your time
To what you will; to you it doth belong
Yourself to pardon of self-doing crime.
I am to wait, though waiting so be hell,
Not blame your pleasure, be it ill or well.

LVI.

LIX. 107.*

If there be nothing new, but that which is
Hath been before, how are our brains beguil'd,
Which, labouring for invention, bear amiss
The second burthen of a former child?
O! that record could with a backward look,
Even of five hundred courses of the sun,
Show me your image in some antique book,
Since mind at first in character was done!

* This Sonnet and the next are classed by Knight as the last in a series of eleven, beginning with the c., and probably addressed to the same person as the first nineteen. In our numbering. they follow the CVIII.

That I might see what the old world could say
To this composed wonder of your frame;
Whether we're mended, or where better they,[29]
Or whether revolution be the same.
O! sure I am, the wits of former days
To subjects worse have given admiring praise.

LX. 103.

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end;
Each changing place with that which goes before,
In sequent toil all forwards do contend.
Nativity, once in the main of light,[30]
Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crown'd,
Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight;
And time that gave, doth now his gift confound.
Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth,
And delves the parallels in beauty's brow;
Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,
And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow:
And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand,
Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.

CXXVI.

LXI. 40.*

Is it thy will, thy image should keep open
My heavy eye-lids to the weary night?
Dost thou desire my slumbers should be broken,
While shadows, like to thee, do mock my sight?

* This Sonnet is classed by Knight as the sixth, in the series on "Absence," beginning with the L.

[29] That is, *wherein* or *in what respects* they were better. H.

[30] The great body of light, or, perhaps, the *ocean* of light. H.

Is it thy spirit that thou send'st from thee
So far from home, into my deeds to pry;
To find out shames and idle hours in me,
The scope and tenour of thy jealousy?
O, no! thy love, though much, is not so great.
It is my love that keeps mine eye awake;
Mine own true love that doth my rest defeat
To play the watchman ever for thy sake:
For thee watch I, whilst thou dost wake elsewhere,
From me far off, with others all too near.

XLIII.

LXII. 111.*

Sin of self-love possesseth all mine eye,
And all my soul, and all my every part;
And for this sin there is no remedy,
It is so grounded inward in my heart.
Methinks, no face so gracious is as mine,
No shape so true, no truth of such account;
And for myself mine own worth do define,
As I all other in all worths surmount.
But when my glass shows me myself indeed,
Bated and chapp'd with tann'd antiquity,
Mine own self-love quite contrary I read;
Self so self-loving were iniquity.
'Tis thee (myself) that for myself I praise,
Painting my age with beauty of thy days.

LXIII. 112.

Against my love shall be, as I am now,
With time's injurious hand crush'd and o'erworn;

*. This and the twelve following Sonnets are placed by Knight in a continuous series of sixteen, beginning with the CXXVI., including, next, the XXII., and ending with the LXXXI

When hours have drain'd his blood, and fill'd his brow
With lines and wrinkles; when his youthful morn
Hath travell'd on to age's steepy night;
And all those beauties, whereof now he's king,
Are vanishing or vanish'd out of sight,
Stealing away the treasure of his spring;—
For such a time do I now fortify
Against confounding age's cruel knife,
That he shall never cut from memory
My sweet love's beauty, though my lover's life:
His beauty shall in these black lines be seen;
And they shall live, and he in them still green.

LXIV. 113.

When I have seen by Time's fell hand defac'd
The rich-proud cost of outworn buried age;
When sometime lofty towers I see down-raz'd,
And brass eternal, slave to mortal rage;
When I have seen the hungry ocean gain
Advantage on the kingdom of the shore,
And the firm soil win of the watery main,
Increasing store with loss, and loss with store;—
When I have seen such interchange of state,
Or state itself confounded to decay,
Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminate,—
That time will come, and take my love away.
This thought is as a death, which cannot choose
But weep to have that which it fears to lose

LXV. 114.

Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea,
But sad mortality o'ersways their power,

How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,
Whose action is no stronger than a flower?
O! how shall summer's honey breath hold out
Against the wreckful siege of battering days,
When rocks impregnable are not so stout,
Nor gates of steel so strong, but time decays?
O, fearful meditation! where, alack!
Shall time's best jewel from time's chest lie hid?
Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back?
Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?
O, none! unless this miracle have might,
That in black ink my love may still shine bright

LXVI. 115.

Tir'd with all these, for restful death I cry;—
As, to behold desert a beggar born,
And needy nothing trimm'd in jollity,
And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
And gilded honour shamefully misplac'd,
And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
And right perfection wrongfully disgrac'd,
And strength by limping sway disabled,
And art made tongue-tied by authority,
And folly (doctor-like) controlling skill,
And simple truth miscall'd simplicity,
And captive good attending captain ill:
Tir'd with all these, from these would I be gone,
Save that, to die, I leave my love alone.

LXVII. 116.

Ah! wherefore with infection should he live,
And with his presence grace impiety,
That sin by him advantage should achieve,
And lace itself with his society?

Why should false painting imitate his cheek,
And steal dead seeing of his living hue?
Why should poor beauty indirectly seek
Roses of shadow, since his rose is true?
Why should he live, now nature bankrupt is,
Beggar'd of blood to blush through lively veins?
For she hath no exchequer now but his,
And, proud of many, lives upon his gains.
O! him she stores, to show what wealth she had
In days long since, before these last so bad.

LXVIII. 117.

Thus is his cheek the map of days outworn,
When beauty liv'd and died as flowers do now,
Before these bastard signs of fair were born,
Or durst inhabit on a living brow;
Before the golden tresses of the dead,
The right of sepulchres, were shorn away,
To live a second life on second head,
Ere beauty's dead fleece made another gay.[31]
In him those holy antique hours are seen,
Without all ornament, itself, and true,
Making no summer of another's green,
Robbing no old to dress his beauty new;
And him as for a map doth nature store,
To show false art what beauty was of yore.

LXIX. 118.

Those parts of thee that the world's eye doth view
Want nothing that the thought of hearts can mend:
All tongues (the voice of souls) give thee that due,
Uttering bare truth, even so as foes commend.

[31] The Poet has several allusions to this custom of the time See The Merchant of Venice, Act iii. sc. 2, note 6; and Much Ado about Nothing, Act ii sc. 3, note 4.

Thine outward thus with outward praise is crown'd;
But those same tongues that give thee so thine own,
In other accents do this praise confound,
By seeing further than the eye hath shown.
They look into the beauty of thy mind,
And that, in guess, they measure by thy deeds;
Then (churls) their thoughts, although their eyes were kind,
To thy fair flower add the rank smell of weeds:
But why thy odour matcheth not thy show,
The solve is this,—that thou dost common grow.[32]

LXX. 119.

That thou art blam'd, shall not be thy defect,
For slander's mark was ever yet the fair;
The ornament of beauty is suspect,[33]
A crow that flies in heaven's sweetest air.
So thou be good, slander doth but approve
Thy worth the greater, being woo'd of time;
For canker vice the sweetest buds doth love,
And thou present'st a pure, unstained prime.
Thou hast pass'd by the ambush of young days,
Either not assail'd, or victor being charg'd;
Yet this thy praise cannot be so thy praise,
To tie up envy, evermore enlarg'd:
If some suspect of ill mask'd not thy show,
Then thou alone kingdoms of hearts should'st owe.

LXXI. 120.

No longer mourn for me when I am dead,
Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell

[32] The original has *solye*, which Malone properly changed to *solve*, meaning, of course, *solution*. H.

[33] *Susvect* for *suspicion*; a common usage with the Poet. H.

Give warning to the world that I am fled
From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell
Nay, if you read this line, remember not
The hand that writ it; for I love you so,
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,
If thinking on me then should make you woe.
O! if (I say) you look upon this verse,
When I perhaps compounded am with clay,
Do not so much as my poor name rehearse,
But let your love even with my life decay;
Lest the wise world should look into your moan,
And mock you with me after I am gone.

LXXII. 121.

O! lest the world should task you to recite
What merit liv'd in me, that you should love
After my death, dear love, forget me quite;
For you in me can nothing worthy prove,
Unless you would devise some virtuous lie,
To do more for me than mine own desert,
And hang more praise upon deceased I
Than niggard truth would willingly impart.
O! lest your true love may seem false in this,
That you for love speak well of me untrue,
My name be buried where my body is,
And live no more to shame nor me nor you:
For I am sham'd by that which I bring forth,
And so should you, to love things nothing worth.

LXXIII. 122.

That time of year thou may'st in me behold,
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold;
Bare, ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang

In me thou seest the twilight of such day,
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest:
In me thou seest the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie;
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

LXXIV. 123.*

But be contented: when that fell arrest
Without all bail shall carry me away,
My life hath in this line some interest,
Which for memorial still with thee shall stay.
When thou reviewest this, thou dost review
The very part was consecrate to thee.
The earth can have but earth, which is his due;
My spirit is thine, the better part of me:
So then thou hast but lost the dregs of life,
The prey of worms, my body being dead;
The coward conquest of a wretch's knife,
Too base of thee to be remembered.
The worth of that, is that which it contains;
And that is this, and this with thee remains.

LXXXI.

LXXV. 45.†

So are you to my thoughts as food to life,
Or as sweet-season'd showers are to the ground;

* This Sonnet is classed by Knight as the fifteenth in a series beginning with the CXXVI., and ending with the LXXXI.

† This Sonnet is made the second in a series of nine entitled "Estrangement," beginning with the XLVIII.

And for the peace of you I hold such strife
As 'twixt a miser and his wealth is found:
Now proud as an enjoyer, and anon
Doubting the filching age will steal his treasure;
Now counting best to be with you alone,
Then better'd that the world may see my pleasure:
Sometime, all full with feasting on your sight,
And by and by clean starved for a look;
Possessing or pursuing no delight,
Save what is had or must from you be took.
Thus do I pine and surfeit day by day,
Or gluttoning on all, or all away.

XLIX.

LXXVI. 57.*

Why is my verse so barren of new pride,
So far from variation or quick change?
Why, with the time, do I not glance aside
To new-found methods and to compounds strange?
Why write I still all one, ever the same,
And keep invention in a noted weed,
That every word doth almost tell my name,
Showing their birth, and where they did proceed?
O! know, sweet love, I always write of you,
And you and love are still my argument;
So, all my best is dressing old words new,
Spending again what is already spent:
For as the sun is daily new and old,
So is my love still telling what is told.

LXXVIII.

* Knight makes this Sonnet the first in a series of ten with the title of "Rivalry." In our numbering, it follows the LXXVII.

LXXVII. 56.*

Thy glass will show thee how thy beauties wear,
Thy dial how thy precious minutes waste;
The vacant leaves thy mind's imprint will bear,
And of this book this learning may'st thou taste:
The wrinkles which thy glass will truly show,
Of mouthed graves will give thee memory;
Thou by thy dial's shady stealth may'st know
Time's thievish progress to eternity.
Look, what thy memory cannot contain,
Commit to these waste blanks; and thou shalt find
Those children nurs'd, deliver'd from thy brain,
To take a new acquaintance of thy mind.
These offices, so oft as thou wilt look,
Shall profit thee, and much enrich thy book.[34]

LXXVI.

LXXVIII. 58.†

So oft have I invok'd thee for my Muse,
And found such fair assistance in my verse,
As every alien pen hath got my use,
And under thee their poesy disperse.
Thine eyes, that taught the dumb on high to sing,
And heavy ignorance aloft to fly,
Have added feathers to the learned's wing,
And given grace a double majesty.
Yet be most proud of that which I compile,
Whose influence is thine, and born of thee:

* Knight sets this Sonnet altogether by itself, as "clearly intended to accompany the present of a note-book."

† This Sonnet and the next two are made continuate with the LXXVI. in the series of ten on "Rivalry."

[34] Steevens observes that this Sonnet was probably designed to accompany a present of a book consisting of blank paper.

In others' works thou dost but mend the style,
And arts with thy sweet graces graced be;
But thou art all my art, and dost advance
As high as learning my rude ignorance.

LXXIX. 59.

Whilst I alone did call upon thy aid,
My verse alone had all thy gentle grace;
But now my gracious numbers are decay'd,
And my sick Muse doth give another place.
I grant, sweet love, thy lovely argument
Deserves the travail of a worthier pen;
Yet what of thee thy poet doth invent,
He robs thee of, and pays it thee again.
He lends thee virtue, and he stole that word
From thy behaviour; beauty doth he give,
And found it in thy cheek; he can afford
No praise to thee but what in thee doth live.
Then, thank him not for that which he doth say,
Since what he owes thee, thou thyself dost pay

LXXX. 60.*

O! how I faint when I of you do write,
Knowing a better spirit doth use your name,
And in the praise thereof spends all his might,
To make me tongue-tied, speaking of your fame.
But since your worth (wide as the ocean is)
The humble as the proudest sail doth bear,
My saucy bark, inferior far to his,
On your broad main doth wilfully appear.[35]

* The fourth in the series of ten on "Rivalry."

[35] Malone conjectures that Spenser was the "better spirit" here alluded to. Spenser died at London on the 16th of January 1599.

Your shallowest help will hold me up afloat,
Whilst he upon your soundless deep doth ride;
Or, being wreck'd, I am a worthless boat;
He of tall building, and of goodly pride:
Then, if he thrive, and I be cast away,
The worst was this,—my love was my decay.

LXXXII.

LXXXI. 124.*

Or I shall live your epitaph to make,
Or you survive when I in earth am rotten:
From hence your memory death cannot take,
Although in me each part will be forgotten.
Your name from hence immortal life shall have,
Though I, once gone, to all the world must die:
The earth can yield me but a common grave,
When you entombed in men's eyes shall lie.
Your monument shall be my gentle verse,
Which eyes not yet created shall o'er-read;
And tongues to be your being shall rehearse,
When all the breathers of this world are dead;
You still shall live (such virtue hath my pen)
Where breath most breathes, even in the mouths of men.

CXXIX.

LXXXII. 61.†

I grant, thou wert not married to my Muse,
And therefore may'st without attaint o'erlook
The dedicated words which writers use
Of their fair subject, blessing every book.

* Continuate with the LXXIV., and closing the series of sixteen which begins with the CXXVI.

† This Sonnet and the next five are classed in continuation of the LXXX. in the series of ten entitled "Rivalry," and beginning with the LXXVI.

Thou art as fair in knowledge as in hue,
Finding thy worth a limit past my praise;
And therefore art enforc'd to seek anew
Some fresher stamp of the time-bettering days.
And do so, love; yet when they have devis'd
What strained touches rhetoric can lend,
Thou truly fair wert truly sympathiz'd
In true plain words, by thy true-telling friend;
And their gross painting might be better us'd
Where cheeks need blood: in thee it is abus'd.

LXXXIII. 62.

I never saw that you did painting need,
And therefore to your fair no painting set;
I found, or thought I found, you did exceed
The barren tender of a poet's debt:
And therefore have I slept in your report,
That you yourself, being extant, well might show
How far a modern quill doth come too short,[36]
Speaking of worth, what worth in you doth grow
This silence for my sin you did impute,
Which shall be most my glory, being dumb;
For I impair not beauty being mute,
When others would give life, and bring a tomb.
There lives more life in one of your fair eyes,
Than both your poets can in praise devise.

LXXXIV. 63.

Who is it that says most? which can say more,
Than this rich praise, that you alone are you?
In whose confine immured is the store,
Which should example where your equal grew.

[36] *Modern* is here used in the sense of *common, ordinary.* The plays have a number of such instances. See Macbeth, Act iv. sc 3, note 9 H.

Lean penury within that pen doth dwell,
That to his subject lends not some small glory;
But he that writes of you, if he can tell
That you are you, so dignifies his story:
Let him but copy what in you is writ,
Not making worse what nature made so clear,
And such a counterpart shall fame his wit,
Making his style admired every where.
You to your beauteous blessings add a curse,
Being fond on praise, which makes your praises worse.

LXXXV. 64.

My tongue-tied Muse in manners holds her still,
While comments of your praise, richly compil'd,
Reserve[37] their character with golden quill,
And precious phrase by all the Muses fil'd.
I think good thoughts, while others write good words;
And, like unletter'd clerk, still cry "Amen"
To every hymn that able spirit affords,
In polish'd form of well-refined pen.
Hearing you prais'd, I say, "'Tis so, 'tis true,"
And to the most of praise add something more;
But that is in my thought, whose love to you,
Though words come hindmost, holds his rank before:
Then, others for the breath of words respect;
Me for my dumb thoughts, speaking in effect.

LXXXVI. 65.

Was it the proud full sail of his great verse,
Bound for the prize of all-too-precious you,

[37] That is, *preserve*; a frequent usage.

That did my ripe thoughts in my brain inhearse,
Making their tomb the womb wherein they grew?
Was it his spirit, by spirits taught to write
Above a mortal pitch, that struck me dead?
No, neither he, nor his compeers by night
Giving him aid, my verse astonished:
He, nor that affable familiar ghost,
Which nightly gulls him with intelligence,
As victors of my silence cannot boast.
I was not sick of any fear from thence;
But when your countenance fill'd up his line,[38]
Then lack'd I matter; that enfeebled mine.

LXXXVII. 66.*

Farewell! thou art too dear for my possessing,
And like enough thou know'st thy estimate:
The charter of thy worth gives thee releasing,
My bonds in thee are all determinate.
For how do I hold thee but by thy granting?
And for that riches where is my deserving?
The cause of this fair gift in me is wanting,
And so my patent back again is swerving.
Thyself thou gav'st, thy own worth then not knowing,
Or me, to whom thou gav'st it, else mistaking;
So thy great gift, upon misprision growing,
Comes home again, on better judgment making.
Thus have I had thee, as a dream doth flatter,
In sleep a king, but, waking, no such matter.

CXXI.

* The last in the series of ten on "Rivalry," beginning with the LXXVI.

[38] So the original, *fill'd* being, as usual, spelt *fild*. Modern editions print *filed*, and explain it *polished*. The use of *matter* shows that *fill'd* is right: for how can a thing be *polished up* with *matter*?

LXXXVIII. 47.*

When thou shalt be dispos'd to set me light,
And place my merit in the eye of scorn,
Upon thy side against myself I'll fight,
And prove thee virtuous, though thou art forsworn
With mine own weakness being best acquainted,
Upon thy part I can set down a story
Of faults conceal'd, wherein I am attainted;
That thou, in losing me, shalt win much glory:
And I by this will be a gainer too;
For bending all my loving thoughts on thee,
The injuries that to myself I do,
Doing thee vantage, double-vantage me.
Such is my love, to thee I so belong,
That for thy right myself will bear all wrong.

LXXXIX. 48.

Say that thou didst forsake me for some fault,
And I will comment upon that offence:
Speak of my lameness, and I straight will halt,
Against thy reasons making no defence.
Thou canst not, love, disgrace me half so ill,
To set a form upon desired change,
As I'll myself disgrace: knowing thy will,
I will acquaintance strangle, and look strange;
Be absent from thy walks; and in my tongue
Thy sweet beloved name no more shall dwell,
Lest I (too much profane) should do it wrong,
And haply of our old acquaintance tell.
For thee, against myself I'll vow debate;
For I must ne'er love him whom thou dost hate.

* This and the next five Sonnets follow the XLIX. in the series of nine on "Estrangement."

XC. 49.

Then, hate me when thou wilt; if ever, now:
Now, while the world is bent my deeds to cross,
Join with the spite of fortune, make me bow,
And do not drop in for an after-loss.
Ah! do not, when my heart hath scap'd this sorrow,
Come in the rearward of a conquer'd woe;
Give not a windy night a rainy morrow,
To linger out a purpos'd overthrow.
If thou wilt leave me, do not leave me last,
When other petty griefs have done their spite;
But in the onset come: so shall I taste
At first the very worst of fortune's might,
And other strains of woe, which now seem woe,
Compar'd with loss of thee, will not seem so.

XCI. 50.

Some glory in their birth, some in their skill,
Some in their wealth, some in their body's force,
Some in their garments, though new-fangled ill;
Some in their hawks and hounds, some in their horse;
And every humour hath his adjunct pleasure,
Wherein it finds a joy above the rest:
But these particulars are not my measure;
All these I better in one general best.
Thy love is better than high birth to me,
Richer than wealth, prouder than garments' cost,
Of more delight than hawks or horses be;
And, having thee, of all men's pride I boast:
Wretched in this alone, that thou may'st take
All this away, and me most wretched make.

XCII. 51.

But do thy worst to steal thyself away,
For term of life thou art assured mine:

And life no longer than thy love will stay,
For it depends upon that love of thine:
Then, need I not to fear the worst of wrongs,
When in the least of them my life hath end.
I see a better state to me belongs
Than that which on thy humour doth depend:
Thou canst not vex me with inconstant mind,
Since that my life on thy revolt doth lie.
O! what a happy title do I find,
Happy to have thy love, happy to die!
But what's so blessed-fair that fears no blot?
Thou may'st be false, and yet I know it not.

XCIII. 52.*

So shall I live, supposing thou art true,
Like a deceived husband; so love's face
May still seem love to me, though alter'd new;
Thy looks with me, thy heart in other place:
For there can live no hatred in thine eye;
Therefore in that I cannot know thy change.
In many's looks the false heart's history
Is writ in moods, and frowns, and wrinkles strange
But Heaven in thy creation did decree,
That in thy face sweet love should ever dwell;
Whate'er thy thoughts or thy heart's workings be,
Thy looks should nothing thence but sweetness tell
How like Eve's apple doth thy beauty grow,
If thy sweet virtue answer not thy show!

XXIV.

XCIV. 144.†

They that have power to hurt, and will do none;
That do not do the thing they most do show;

* The last in the series of nine on "Estrangement," beginning with the XLVIII.

† This and the next two Sonnets are made a set by themselves,

Who, moving others, are themselves as stone,
Unmoved, cold, and to temptation slow;—
They rightly do inherit Heaven's graces,
And husband nature's riches from expense;
They are the lords and owners of their faces,
Others but stewards of their excellence.
The summer's flower is to the summer sweet,
Though to itself it only live and die;
But if that flower with base infection meet,
The basest weed outbraves his dignity:
For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds;
Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.

XCV. 145.

How sweet and lovely dost thou make the shame,
Which, like a canker in the fragrant rose,
Doth spot the beauty of thy budding name!
O, in what sweets dost thou thy sins enclose!
That tongue, that tells the story of thy days,
Making lascivious comments on thy sport,
Cannot dispraise but in a kind of praise:
Naming thy name blesses an ill report.
O! what a mansion have those vices got,
Which for their habitation chose out thee;
Where beauty's veil doth cover every blot;
And all things turn to fair, that eyes can see!
Take heed, dear heart, of this large privilege:
The hardest knife ill-us'd doth lose his edge.

XCVI. 146.

Some say, thy fault is youth, some, wantonness;
Some say, thy grace is youth and gentle sport;

as in mild reproof of A Friend's Faults." In our numbering they follow the XLII.

Both grace and faults are lov'd of more and less:[39]
Thou mak'st faults graces that to thee resort.
As on the finger of a throned queen
The basest jewel will be well esteem'd;
So are those errors that in thee are seen,
To truths translated, and for true things deem'd.
How many lambs might the stern wolf betray,
If like a lamb he could his looks translate!
How many gazers might'st thou lead away,
If thou wouldst use the strength of all thy state!
But do not so; I love thee in such sort,
As, thou being mine, mine is thy good report.[40]

CXVIII.

XCVII. 69.*

How like a winter hath my absence been
From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year!
What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen,
What old December's bareness every where!
And yet this time remov'd[41] was summer's time;
The teeming autumn, big with rich increase,
Bearing the wanton burden of the prime,
Like widow'd wombs after their lords' decease:
Yet this abundant issue seem'd to me
But hope of orphans, and unfather'd fruit;
For summer and his pleasures wait on thee,
And, thou away, the very birds are mute;
Or, if they sing, 'tis with so dull a cheer,
That leaves look pale, dreading the winter's near.

* This and the next two are classed together by themselves, as forming a second poem on "Absence," and apparently addressed to a woman. In our numbering, they follow the CXLVI.

[39] *More* and *less* is *great* and *small*. The usage is common in all the old poets. H.

[40] The same couplet closes the 36th Sonnet. H.

[41] That is, this time in which I was remote from thee.

XCVIII. 70.

From you have I been absent in the spring,
When proud-pied April, dress'd in all his trim,
Hath put a spirit of youth in every thing,
That heavy Saturn laugh'd and leap'd with him:
Yet nor the lays of birds, nor the sweet smell
Of different flowers in odour and in hue,
Could make me any summer's story tell,
Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew:
Nor did I wonder at the lily's white,
Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose;
They were but sweet, but figures of delight,
Drawn after you; you pattern of all those.
Yet seem'd it winter still, and, you away,
As with your shadow I with these did play:

XCIX. 71.

The forward violet thus did I chide:
"Sweet thief, whence didst thou steal thy sweet that smells,
If not from my love's breath? the purple pride,
Which on thy soft cheek for complexion dwells,
In my love's veins thou hast too grossly dy'd."
The lily I condemned for thy hand,
And buds of marjoram had stol'n thy hair:
The roses fearfully on thorns did stand,
One blushing shame, another white despair;
A third, nor red nor white, had stol'n of both,
And to this robbery had annex'd thy breath;
But, for his theft, in pride of all his growth
A vengeful canker eat him up to death.
More flowers I noted, yet I none could see,
But sweet or colour it had stol'n from thee.

C. 98.*

Where art thou, Muse, that thou forget'st so long
To speak of that which gives thee all thy might?
Spend'st thou thy fury on some worthless song,[42]
Darkening thy power, to lend base subjects light?
Return, forgetful Muse, and straight redeem
In gentle numbers time so idly spent;
Sing to the ear that doth thy lays esteem,
And gives thy pen both skill and argument.
Rise, resty Muse! my love's sweet face survey,
If Time have any wrinkle graven there;
If any, be a satire to decay,
And make Time's spoils despised every where.
Give my love fame faster than Time wastes life;
So thou prevent'st his scythe and crooked knife

CI. 99.

O, truant Muse! what shall be thy amends,
For thy neglect of truth in beauty dy'd?
Both truth and beauty on my love depends;
So dost thou too, and therein dignified.
Make answer, Muse: wilt thou not haply say,
"Truth needs no colour, with his colour fix'd;
Beauty no pencil, beauty's truth to lay;
But best is best, if never intermix'd?"

* This and the eight following are classed in a series of eleven addressed, probably, to the same friend as the first nineteen. In our figuring, they come next after the CXLV.

[42] *Fury* was often thus used for poetic inspiration. So in some verses signed "Hobynoll," written in praise of The Faerie Queene:

"Collyn, I see, by thy new-taken taske,
Some sacred *fury* hath enricht thy braynes,
That leades thy Muse in haughty verse to maske.
And loath the layes that 'longs to lowly swaynes:
That liftes thy notes from Shepheardes unto Kinges:
So like the lively Larke that mounting singes."

Because he needs no praise, wilt thou be dumb?
Excuse not silence so; for't lies in thee
To make him much outlive a gilded tomb,
And to be prais'd of ages yet to be.
Then, do thy office, Muse: I teach thee how
To make him seem long hence as he shows now.

CII. 100.

My love is strengthen'd, though more weak in seeming;
I love not less, though less the show appear:
That love is merchandiz'd, whose rich esteeming
The owner's tongue doth publish every where.
Our love was new, and then but in the spring,
When I was wont to greet it with my lays;
As Philomel in summer's front doth sing,
And stops her pipe in growth of riper days:
Not that the summer is less pleasant now,
Than when her mournful hymns did hush the night
But that wild music burdens every bough,
And sweets grown common lose their dear delight:
Therefore, like her, I sometime hold my tongue
Because I would not dull you with my song.

CIII. 101.

Alack! what poverty my Muse brings forth,
That, having such a scope to show her pride,
The argument, all bare, is of more worth,
Than when it hath my added praise beside.
O! blame me not, if I no more can write:
Look in your glass, and there appears a face
That over-goes my blunt invention quite,
Dulling my lines, and doing me disgrace.
Were it not sinful, then, striving to mend,
To mar the subject that before was well?

For to no other pass my verses tend,
Than of your graces and your gifts to tell;
And more, much more, than in my verse can sit,
Your own glass shows you, when you look in it.

CIV. 102.

To me, fair friend, you never can be old;
For as you were, when first your eye I ey'd,
Such seems your beauty still. Three winters cold
Have from the forests shook three summers' pride
Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turn'd
In process of the seasons have I seen;
Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burn'd,
Since first I saw you fresh, which yet are green.
Ah! yet doth beauty, like a dial hand,
Steal from his figure, and no pace perceiv'd;
So your sweet hue, which methinks still doth stand,
Hath motion, and mine eye may be deceiv'd:
For fear of which, hear this, thou age unbred,—
Ere you were born, was beauty's summer dead.

CV. 103.

Let not my love be call'd idolatry,
Nor my beloved as an idol show,
Since all alike my songs and praises be,
To one, of one, still such, and ever so.
Kind is my love to-day, to-morrow kind,
Still constant in a wondrous excellence;
Therefore my verse, to constancy confin'd,
One thing expressing, leaves out difference.
Fair, kind, and true, is all my argument,
Fair, kind, and true, varying to other words;
And in this change is my invention spent,
Three themes in one, which wondrous scope affords

Fair, kind, and true, have often liv'd alone;
Which three, till now, never kept seat in one.

CVI. 104.

When in the chronicle of wasted time
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,
And beauty making beautiful old rhyme,
In praise of ladies dead, and lovely knights;
Then, in the blazon of sweet beauty's best,
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,
I see their antique pen would have express'd
Even such a beauty as you master now.
So all their praises are but prophecies
Of this our time, all you prefiguring;
And, for they look'd but with divining eyes,
They had not skill enough your worth to sing:
For we, which now behold these present days,
Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.

CVII. 105.

Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul
Of the wide world, dreaming on things to come,
Can yet the lease of my true love control,
Suppos'd as forfeit to a confin'd doom.
The mortal moon hath her eclipse endur'd,
And the sad augurs mock their own presage;
Incertainties now crown themselves assur'd,
And peace proclaims olives of endless age.
Now with the drops of this most balmy time
My love looks fresh, and death to me subscribes;[43]
Since, spite of him, I'll live in this poor rhyme,
While he insults o'er dull and speechless tribes:

[43] That is, *resigns* or *submits*. See King Lear, Act i. sc. 2 note 4.

And thou in this shalt find thy monument,
When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent.

CVIII. 106.*

What's in the brain that ink may character,
Which hath not figur'd to thee my true spirit?
What's new to speak, what new to register,
That may express my love, or thy dear merit?
Nothing, sweet boy; but yet, like prayers divine,
I must each day say o'er the very same;
Counting no old thing old, thou mine, I thine,
Even as when first I hallow'd thy fair name.
So that eternal love, in love's fresh case,
Weighs not the dust and injury of age,
Nor gives to necessary wrinkles place,
But makes antiquity for aye his page;
Finding the first conceit of love there bred,
Where time and outward form would show it dead.

LIX.

CIX. 72.†

O! never say that I was false of heart,
Though absence seem'd my flame to qualify.
As easy might I from myself depart,
As from my soul, which in thy breast doth lie.
That is my home of love: if I have rang'd,
Like him that travels, I return again,
Just to the time, not with the time exchang'd;
So that myself bring water for my stain.

* This, together with the LIX. and LX., finish the series of eleven, which seems to have been addressed, after an interval, to the same friend as the first nineteen.

† This and the eight following are classed in a series of thirteen, entitled "Fidelity." They seem addressed to a woman perhaps to the same as the XCIX., which precedes them in our numbering.

Never believe, though in my nature reign'd
All frailties that besiege all kinds of blood,
That it could so preposterously be stain'd,
To leave for nothing all thy sum of good;
For nothing this wide universe I call,
Save thou, my Rose; in it thou art my all.

CX. 73.

Alas! 'tis true I have gone here and there,
And made myself a motley to the view;[44]
Gor'd mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear,
Made old offences of affections new:
Most true it is, that I have look'd on truth
Askance and strangely; but, by all above,
These blenches gave my heart another youth,[45]
And worse essays prov'd thee my best of love.
Now all is done, save what shall have no end:
Mine appetite I never more will grind
On newer proof, to try an older friend,
A god in love, to whom I am confin'd.
Then, give me welcome, next my heaven the best,
Even to thy pure, and most, most loving breast.

CXI. 74.

O! for my sake do you with Fortune chide,
The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
That did not better for my life provide,
Than public means, which public manners breeds.

[44] *Motley* was the proper dress of allowed or professional fools. See As You Like It, Act ii. sc. 7; also King Henry VIII., Prologue, note 1. H.

[45] To *blench* is to *start* or *fly off from*. See The Winter's Tale, Act i. sc. 2, note 34. — The Poet means that his offences have given his heart another youth by proving the strength of his friend's affection H.

Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,
And almost thence my nature is subdued
To what it works in, like the dyer's hand.
Pity me, then, and wish I were renew'd,
Whilst, like a willing patient, I will drink
Potions of eysell 'gainst my strong infection:[46]
No bitterness that I will bitter think,
Nor double penance, to correct correction.
Pity me, then, dear friend; and I assure ye,
Even that your pity is enough to cure me.[47]

CXII. 75.

Your love and pity doth th' impression fill
Which vulgar scandal stamp'd upon my brow;
For what care I who calls me well or ill,
So you o'er-green my bad, my good allow?
You are my all-the-world, and I must strive
To know my shames and praises from your tongue

[46] *Eysell* is an old word for vinegar.

[47] It is scarce possible to doubt that in the two foregoing Sonnets we have some of the Poet's honest feelings respecting himself. Some foolish rhymester having spoken of Shakespeare and Garrick as kindred minds, Charles Lamb thereupon quotes from these Sonnets, and comments thus: "Who can read these instances of jealous self-watchfulness in our sweet Shakespeare, and dream of any congeniality between him and one that, by every tradition of him, appears to have been as mere a player as ever existed; to have had his mind tainted with the lowest players' vices,—envy and jealousy, and miserable cravings after applause; one who in the exercise of his profession was jealous even of women-performers that stood in his way; a manager full of managerial tricks and stratagems and finesse;—that any resemblance should be dreamed of between him and Shakespeare,—Shakespeare who, in the plenitude and consciousness of his own powers, could, with that noble modesty which we can neither imitate nor appreciate, express himself thus of his own sense of his own defects:

> 'Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
> Featur'd like him, like him with friends possess'd;
> Desiring *this man's art, and that man's scope.*'" H.

None else to me, nor I to none alive,
That my steel'd sense or changes, right or wrong.[48]
In so profound abysm I throw all care
Of others' voices, that my adder's sense
To critic and to flatterer stopped are.
Mark how with my neglect I do dispense:
You are so strongly in my purpose bred,
That all the world besides, methinks, are dead.

CXIII. 76.

Since I left you, mine eye is in my mind,
And that which governs me to go about
Doth part his function, and is partly blind;
Seems seeing, but effectually is out;
For it no form delivers to the heart
Of bird, of flower, or shape, which it doth latch:[49]
Of his quick objects hath the mind no part,
Nor his own vision holds what it doth catch;
For if it see the rud'st or gentlest sight,
The most sweet favour, or deformed'st creature,
The mountain or the sea, the day or night,
The crow or dove, it shapes them to your feature:
Incapable of more, replete with you,
My most true mind thus maketh mine untrue.[50]

CXIV. 77.

Or whether doth my mind, being crown'd with you,
Drink up the monarch's plague, this flattery?

[48] The meaning seems to be, you are the only person who has power to change my stubborn resolution, either to what is right or to what is wrong.

[49] *Latch* is a provincial word for *catch*. See Macbeth, Act iv sc. 3, note 12. H.

[50] The word *untrue* is here used as a substantive. The sincerity of my affection is the cause of my untruth; that is, of my not seeing objects truly, such as they appear to the rest of mankind. — MALONE.

Or whether shall I say, mine eye saith true,
And that your love taught it this alchemy,
To make, of monsters and things indigest,
Such cherubins as your sweet self resemble,
Creating every bad a perfect best,
As fast as objects to his beams assemble?
O, 'tis the first! 'tis flattery in my seeing,
And my great mind most kingly drinks it up:
Mine eye well knows what with his gust is 'greeing,
And to his palate doth prepare the cup:
If it be poison'd, 'tis the lesser sin
That mine eye loves it, and doth first begin.

CXV. 78.

Those lines that I before have writ do lie,
Even those that said I could not love you dearer;
Yet then my judgment knew no reason why
My most full flame should afterwards burn clearer:
But, reckoning time, whose million'd accidents
Creep in 'twixt vows, and change decrees of kings,
Tan sacred beauty, blunt the sharp'st intents,
Divert strong minds to th' course of altering things;
Alas! why, fearing of time's tyranny,
Might I not then say, "Now I love you best,"
When I was certain o'er incertainty,
Crowning the present, doubting of the rest?
Love is a babe; then, might I not say so,
To give full growth to that which still doth grow?

CXVI. 79.

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments: love is not love,
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:

O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests, and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark.
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error, and upon me prov'd,
I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.

CXVII. 80.*

Accuse me thus: That I have scanted all
Wherein I should your great deserts repay;
Forgot upon your dearest love to call,
Whereto all bonds do tie me day by day;
That I have frequent been with unknown minds,
And given to time your own dear-purchas'd right;
That I have hoisted sail to all the winds
Which should transport me farthest from your sight
Book both my wilfulness and errors down,
And on just proof surmise accumulate;
Bring me within the level of your frown,
But shoot not at me in your waken'd hate;
Since my appeal says, I did strive to prove
The constancy and virtue of your love.

CXXII.

* This makes the ninth in the noble series of thirteen on "Fidelity."

CXVIII. 147.*

Like as, to make our appetites more keen,
With eager compounds we our palate urge;[51]
As, to prevent our maladies unseen,
We sicken to shun sickness when we purge;
Even so, being full of your ne'er-cloying sweetness,
To bitter sauces did I frame my feeding;
And, sick of welfare, found a kind of meetness
To be diseas'd, ere that there was true needing.
Thus policy in love, t' anticipate
The ills that were not, grew to faults assur'd,
And brought to medicine a healthful state,
Which, rank of goodness, would by ill be cur'd:
But thence I learn, and find the lesson true,
Drugs poison him that so fell sick of you.

CXIX. 148.

What potions have I drunk of siren tears,
Distill'd from limbecks foul as hell within,
Applying fears to hopes, and hopes to fears,
Still losing when I saw myself to win!
What wretched errors hath my heart committed,
Whilst it hath thought itself so blessed never!
How have mine eyes out of their spheres been fitted,
In the distraction of this madding fever!
O, benefit of ill! now I find true,
That better is by evil still made better;
And ruin'd love, when it is built anew,
Grows fairer than at first, more strong, far greater.

* This and the next two are set off by themselves, as forming, together, a poem entitled "Forgiveness." In our numbering, they follow the XCVI.

[51] *Eager* is *sharp, acid.* See Hamlet. Act i. sc. 4, note 1; and sc. 5, note 7.

So I return rebuk'd to my content,
And gain by ill thrice more than I have spent.

CXX. 149.

That you were once unkind, befriends me now;
And for that sorrow, which I then did feel,
Needs must I under my transgression bow,
Unless my nerves were brass or hammer'd steel:
For if you were by my unkindness shaken,
As I by yours, you've pass'd a hell of time;
And I, a tyrant, have no leisure taken
To weigh how once I suffer'd in your crime.
O! that our night of woe might have remember'd
My deepest sense, how hard true sorrow hits;
And soon to you, as you to me, then tender'd
The humble salve which wounded bosoms fits!
But that your trespass now becomes a fee;
Mine ransoms yours, and yours must ransom me.

CXXXV.

CXXI. 67.*

'Tis better to be vile, than vile esteem'd,
When not to be receives reproach of being;
And the just pleasure lost, which is so deem'd,
Not by our feeling, but by others' seeing:
For why should others' false adulterate eyes
Give salutation to my sportive blood?
Or on my frailties why are frailer spies,
Which in their wills count bad what I think good?
No, I am that I am; and they that level
At my abuses, reckon up their own:
I may be straight, though they themselves be bevel.
By their rank thoughts my deeds must not be shown;

* This Sonnet is regarded as standing alone, its subject being, perhaps, "Reputation." In our numbering, it follows the LXXXVII

Unless this general evil they maintain,—
All men are bad, and in their badness reign.

CXLVI.

CXXII. 81.*

Thy gift, thy tables, are within my brain
Full character'd with lasting memory,
Which shall above that idle rank remain,
Beyond all date, even to eternity;
Or, at the least, so long as brain and heart
Have faculty by nature to subsist:
Till each to raz'd oblivion yield his part
Of thee, thy record never can be miss'd.
That poor retention could not so much hold,
Nor need I tallies, thy dear love to score;
Therefore to give them from me was I bold,
To trust those tables that receive thee more:
To keep an adjunct to remember thee,
Were to import forgetfulness in me

CXXIII. 82.

No! Time, thou shalt not boast that I do change:
Thy pyramids, built up with newer might,
To me are nothing novel, nothing strange;
They are but dressings of a former sight.
Our dates are brief, and therefore we admire
What thou dost foist upon us that is old,
And rather make them born to our desire,
Than think that we before have heard them told.

* This and the next three are made continuate with the CXVII in the series entitled "Fidelity."

52 "That poor retention" is the table-book given to him by his friend, incapable of retaining, or rather of containing, so much as the tablet of the brain. — MALONE

Thy registers and thee I both defy,
Not wondering at the present nor the past;
For thy records and what we see do lie,
Made more or less by thy continual haste:
This I do vow, and this shall ever be,—
I will be true, despite thy scythe and thee.

CXXIV. 83.

If my dear love were but the child of state,
It might for fortune's bastard be unfather'd,
As subject to time's love or to time's hate,
Weeds among weeds, or flowers with flowers gather'd.
No, it was builded far from accident;
It suffers not in smiling pomp, nor falls
Under the blow of thralled discontent,
Whereto th' inviting time our fashion calls.
It fears not policy, that heretic,
Which works on leases of short-number'd hours;
But all alone stands hugely politic,
That it nor grows with heat, nor drowns with showers.
To this I witness call the fools of time,
Which die for goodness, who have liv'd for crime

CXXV. 84.

Were't aught to me I bore the canopy,
With my extern the outward honouring,
Or laid great bases for eternity,
Which prove more short than waste or ruining?
Have I not seen dwellers on form and favour
Lose all, and more, by paying too much rent;
For compound sweet foregoing simple savour,
Pitiful thrivers, in their gazing spent?

No; let me be obsequious in thy heart,
And take thou my oblation, poor but free,
Which is not mix'd with seconds, knows no art,
But mutual render, only me for thee.
Hence, thou suborn'd informer! a true soul,
When most impeach'd, stands least in thy control.

CXXVII.

CXXVI. 109.*

O thou, my lovely boy! who in thy power
Dost hold Time's fickle glass, his sickle, hour;
Who hast by waning grown, and therein show'st
Thy lovers withering, as thy sweet self grow'st;
If nature, sovereign mistress over wrack,
As thou goest onwards, still will pluck thee back
She keeps thee to this purpose, that her skill
May time disgrace, and wretched minutes kill.
Yet fear her, O, thou minion of her pleasure!
She may detain, but not still keep her treasure:
Her audit, though delay'd, answer'd must be,
And her quietus is to render thee.[53]

XXII.

CXXVII. 85.†

In the old age black was not counted fair,
Or, if it were, it bore not beauty's name;
But now is black beauty's successive heir,
And beauty slander'd with a bastard shame:
For since each hand hath put on nature's power,
Fairing the foul with art's false borrow'd face,

* This is made the first in a series of sixteen. In our numbering, it comes next after the LX.

† This goes with the CXXXI. and CXXXII. in a little set entitled "Black Eyes." In our numbering, it follows the CXXV.

[53] Instead of a sonnet proper, we here have a stanza of twelve lines formed into six couplets. H.

Sweet beauty hath no name, no holy bower,[54]
But is profan'd, if not lives in disgrace.
Therefore, my mistress' brows are raven black;
Her eyes so suited; and they mourners seem
At such, who, not born fair, no beauty lack,
Slandering creation with a false esteem:[55]
Yet so they mourn, becoming of their woe,
That every tongue says beauty should look so.

CXXXI.

CXXVIII. 88.*

How oft, when thou, my music, music playest
Upon that blessed wood, whose motion sounds
With thy sweet fingers; when thou gently swayest
The wiry concord that mine ear confounds;
Do I envy those jacks,[56] that nimble leap
To kiss the tender inward of thy hand;
Whilst my poor lips, which should that harvest reap
At the wood's boldness by thee blushing stand.
To be so tickled, they would change their state
And situation with those dancing chips,
O'er whom thy fingers walk with gentle gait,
Making dead wood more blest than living lips.
Since saucy jacks so happy are in this,
Give them thy fingers, me thy lips to kiss.

CXXX.

* This piece of "airy elegance" is placed by itself, to be headed "The Virginal." In our numbering it follows the CXXXII.

[54] So the original. Modern editions have changed *bower* into *hour*. There is rhyme enough in the change, but no reason. H.

[55] They seem to mourn, that those who are not born fair, are yet possessed of an artificial beauty, by which they pass for what they are not; and thus dishonour nature by their imperfect imitation and false pretensions. — MALONE.

[56] The *jacks* here spoken of are the keys of the virginal upon which the Poet supposes the person addressed to be playing. The verb *envy* often had the accent on the last syllable B

CXXIX. 125.*

Th' expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action; and, till action, lust
Is perjur'd, murderous, bloody, full of blame,
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust;
Enjoy'd no sooner but despised straight;
Past reason hunted, and, no sooner had,
Past reason hated, as a swallow'd bait,
On purpose laid to make the taker mad:
Mad in pursuit, and in possession so;
Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme;
A bliss in proof, and, prov'd, a very woe;[57]
Before, a joy propos'd; behind, a dream:
All this the world well knows; yet none knows well
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell

CXXXVII.

CXXX. 89.†

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why, then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak; yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound:

* This is made the first in a series of ten, entitled "Love and Hatred." In our numbering, it follows the LXXXI.

† This and the XXI. are placed together by themselves in a little poem entitled "False Compare." In our numbering, they follow the CXXVIII.

[57] The original reads, "and *proud and* very woe" The correction is Malone's. M.

I grant, I never saw a goddess go;
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground
And yet, by Heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she, belied with false compare.

XXI.

CXXXI. 86.*

Thou art as tyrannous, so as thou art,
As those whose beauties proudly make them cruel;
For well thou know'st, to my dear doting heart
Thou art the fairest and most precious jewel.
Yet, in good faith, some say, that thee behold,
Thy face hath not the power to make love groan:
To say they err I dare not be so bold,
Although I swear it to myself alone;
And, to be sure that is not false I swear,
A thousand groans, but thinking on thy face,
One on another's neck do witness bear,
Thy black is fairest in my judgment's place.
In nothing art thou black, save in thy deeds;
And thence this slander, as I think, proceeds.

CXXXII. 87.

Thine eyes I love, and they, as pitying me,
Knowing thy heart torments me with disdain,[59]
Have put on black, and loving mourners be,
Looking with pretty ruth upon my pain.
And, truly, not the morning sun of heaven
Better becomes the gray cheeks of the east,

* This and the next are placed in continuation of the CXXVII. in the trio entitled "Black Eyes."

[59] The original has *torment*, which makes *they* instead of *heart* the subject of the verb. With that arrangement, the passage is little better than nonsense. We are indebted to a correspondent of Mr. Collier for the judicious change. H.

Nor that full star that ushers in the even,
Doth half that glory to the sober west,
As those two mourning eyes become thy face.
O! let it, then, as well beseem thy heart
To mourn for me, since mourning doth thee grace
And suit thy pity like in every part:
Then will I swear beauty herself is black,
And all they foul that thy complexion lack.

CXXVIII.

CXXXIII. 135.*

Beshrew that heart, that makes my heart to groan
For that deep wound it gives my friend and me!
Is't not enough to torture me alone,
But slave to slavery my sweet'st friend must be?
Me from myself thy cruel eye hath taken,
And my next self thou harder hast engross'd:
Of him, myself, and thee, I am forsaken;
A torment thrice threefold thus to be cross'd.
Prison my heart in thy steel bosom's ward,
But then my friend's heart let my poor heart bail:
Whoe'er keeps me, let my heart be his guard;
Thou canst not then use rigour in my jail:
And yet thou wilt; for I, being pent in thee,
Perforce am thine, and all that is in me.

CXXXIV. 136.

So, now I have confess'd that he is thine,
And I myself am mortgag'd to thy will;
Myself I'll forfeit, so that other mine
Thou wilt restore, to be my comfort still:

* This and the next are grouped with the CXLIV. as forming by themselves a little poem entitled "Infidelity." In our numbering they follow the CLII.

But thou wilt not, nor he will not be free;
For thou art covetous, and he is kind:
He learn'd but, surety-like, to write for me,
Under that bond that him as fast doth bind.
The statute of thy beauty thou wilt take,[59]
Thou usurer, that put'st forth all to use,
And sue a friend, came debtor for my sake;
So him I lose through my unkind abuse.
Him have I lost; thou hast both him and me:
He pays the whole, and yet am I not free.

CXLIV

CXXXV. 150.*

Whoever hath her wish, thou hast thy *Will*,
And *Will* to boot, and *Will* in overplus;
More than enough am I that vex thee still,
To thy sweet will making addition thus.
Wilt thou, whose will is large and spacious,
Not once vouchsafe to hide my will in thine?
Shall will in others seem right gracious,
And in my will no fair acceptance shine?
The sea, all water, yet receives rain still,
And in abundance addeth to his store;
So thou, being rich in *Will*, add to thy *Will*
One will of mine, to make thy large *Will* more.
Let no unkind, no fair beseechers kill;
Think all but one, and me in that one *Will*.[60]

* This and the next go with the CXLIII. in a little poem playing on the author's name. In our numbering, they follow the CXX.

[59] Statute has here its legal signification; that of a security or obligation for money. — MALONE.

[60] In this Sonnet and the next, we print the *Wills* just as they stand in the original. Of course this is a play on the Poet's name *William*.

CXXXVI. 151.

If thy soul check thee that I come so near,
Swear to thy blind soul that I was thy *Will*,
And will, thy soul knows, is admitted there;
Thus far, for love, my love-suit, sweet, fulfil.
Will will fulfil the treasure of thy love,
Ay, fill it full with wills, and my will one.
In things of great receipt with ease we prove;
Among a number one is reckon'd none.[61]
Then, in the number let me pass untold,
Though in thy stores' account I one must be;
For nothing hold me, so it please thee hold
That nothing, me, a something sweet to thee:
Make but my name thy love, and love that still,
And then thou lov'st me, — for my name is *Will*.

CXLIII.

CXXXVII. 126.*

Thou blind fool, Love, what dost thou to mine eyes,
That they behold, and see not what they see?
They know what beauty is, see where it lies,
Yet what the best is, take the worst to be.
If eyes, corrupt by over-partial looks,
Be anchor'd in the bay where all men ride,
Why of eyes' falsehood hast thou forged hooks,
Whereto the judgment of my heart is tied?
Why should my heart think that a several plot,[62]
Which my heart knows the wide world's common
place?

* This and the next are placed in continuation of the CXXIX., in the series of ten entitled "Love and Hatred."

[61] Several allusions have been found to this way of reckoning See Romeo and Juliet, Act i. sc. 2, note 5. H.

[62] "A several plot," as distinguished from a "common place.' is a piece of ground that has been separated and made private property. A similar play upon *several* and *common* is explained in Love's Labour's Lost. Act ii. sc. 1. note 7. H.

Or mine eyes, seeing this, say this is not,
To put fair truth upon so foul a face?
In things right true my heart and eyes have err'd,
And to this false plague are they now transferr'd

CXXXVIII. 127.

When my love swears that she is made of truth,
I do believe her, though I know she lies;
That she might think me some untutor'd youth,
Unlearned in the world's false subtilties.
Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young,
Although she knows my days are past the best,
Simply I credit her false-speaking tongue:
On both sides thus is simple truth suppress'd.
But wherefore says she not she is unjust?
And wherefore say not I that I am old?
O! love's best habit is in seeming-trust,
And age in love loves not to have years told·
Therefore I lie with her, and she with me,
And in our faults by lies we flatter'd be.[63]

CXLI.

CXXXIX. 91.*

O! call not me to justify the wrong
That thy unkindness lays upon my heart;
Wound me not with thine eye, but with thy tongue;
Use power with power, and slay me not by art.
Tell me thou lov'st elsewhere; but in my sight.
Dear heart, forbear to glance thine eye aside:

* This and the next are grouped with the CXLIX. in a set of three, to be headed "Tyranny." In our numbering, they come next after the XXI.

[63] This Sonnet, with some variations, was first printed in The Passionate Pilgrim, 1599, and afterwards included in the collection of Sonnets. H.

What need'st thou wound with cunning, when thy might
Is more than my o'er-press'd defence can 'bide?
Let me excuse thee: Ah! my love well knows
Her pretty looks have been mine enemies;
And therefore from my face she turns my foes,
That they elsewhere might dart their injuries.
Yet do not so; but since I am near slain,
Kill me outright with looks, and rid my pain.

CXL. 92.

Be wise as thou art cruel; do not press
My tongue-tied patience with too much disdain;
Lest sorrow lend me words, and words express
The manner of my pity-wanting pain.
If I might teach thee wit, better it were,
Though not to love, yet, love, to tell me so;
As testy sick men, when their deaths be near,
No news but health from their physicians know:
For, if I should despair, I should grow mad,
And in my madness might speak ill of thee:
Now this ill-wresting world is grown so bad,
Mad slanderers by mad ears believed be.
That I may not be so, nor thou belied,
Bear thine eyes straight, though thy proud heart go wide.

CXLIX.

CXLI. 128.*

In faith, I do not love thee with mine eyes,
For they in thee a thousand errors note;

* This and the next are set in continuation of the CXXXVIII. in the series of ten on "Love and Hatred," beginning with the CXXIX.

But 'tis my heart that loves what they despise,
Who in despite of view is pleas'd to dote.
Nor are mine ears with thy tongue's tune delighted;
Nor tender feeling, to base touches prone,
Nor taste, nor smell desire to be invited
To any sensual feast with thee alone:
But my five wits, nor my five senses can[64]
Dissuade one foolish heart from serving thee;
Who leave unsway'd the likeness of a man,
Thy proud heart's slave and vassal wretch to be
Only my plague thus far I count my gain,
That she that makes me sin awards me pain.

CXLII. 129.

Love is my sin, and thy dear virtue hate,
Hate of my sin, grounded on sinful loving.
O! but with mine compare thou thine own state,
And thou shalt find it merits not reproving;
Or, if it do, not from those lips of thine,
That have profan'd their scarlet ornaments,
And seal'd false bonds of love, as oft as mine
Robb'd others' beds' revenues of their rents.
Be't lawful I love thee, as thou lov'st those
Whom thine eyes woo as mine importune thee:
Root pity in thy heart, that, when it grows,
Thy pity may deserve to pitied be.
If thou dost seek to have what thou dost hide,
By self-example may'st thou be denied!

CXLVII.

[64] The Poet elsewhere implies the same distinction of the five wits and the five senses. See Much Ado about Nothing, Act *i* sc. 1, note 8. H.

CXLIII. 152.*

Lo! as a careful housewife runs to catch
One of her feather'd creatures broke away;
Sets down her babe, and makes all swift despatch
In pursuit of the thing she would have stay;
Whilst her neglected child holds her in chase,
Cries to catch her, whose busy care is bent
To follow that which flies before her face,
Not prizing her poor infant's discontent;—
So runn'st thou after that which flies from thee,
Whilst I, thy babe, chase thee afar behind;
But, if thou catch thy hope, turn back to me,
And play the mother's part; kiss me, be kind:
So will I pray that thou may'st have thy *Will*,
If thou turn back, and my loud crying still.

CLIII.

CXLIV. 137.†

Two loves I have of comfort and despair,
Which, like two spirits, do suggest me still:[65]
The better angel is a man, right fair;
The worser spirit a woman, colour'd ill.
To win me soon to hell, my female evil
Tempteth my better angel from my side,
And would corrupt my saint to be a devil,
Wooing his purity with her foul pride.
And whether that my angel be turn'd fiend,
Suspect I may, yet not directly tell;

* This Sonnet stands in continuation of the CXXXVI. in the trio playing upon the Poet's name.

† This Sonnet continues the CXXXIV., in the set of three entitled "Infidelity."

[65] *Suggest* was continually used for *tempt*. — This Sonnet, also, was first printed in The Passionate Pilgrim, with some variations.

H.

But being both from me, both to each friend,
I guess one angel in another's hell:
Yet this shall I ne'er know, but live in doubt,
Till my bad angel fire my good one out.

XXXIII.

CXLV. 97.*

Those lips that Love's own hand did make,
Breath'd forth the sound that said, "I hate,"
To me, that languish'd for her sake;
But when she saw my woeful state,
Straight in her heart did mercy come,
Chiding that tongue, that ever sweet
Was us'd in giving gentle doom;
And taught it thus anew to greet:
"I hate," she alter'd with an end,
That follow'd it as gentle day
Doth follow night, who, like a fiend,
From heaven to hell is flown away:
"I hate," from hate away she threw,
And sav'd my life, saying, — "not you."

C.

CXLVI. 68.†

Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,[66]
Fool'd by those rebel powers that thee array,

* This Sonnet seems unconnected with any other, its title being, perhaps, "I Hate not You." In our numbering, it follows the LVI.

† This Sonnet is set off by itself, as unconnected with any other, and entitled "The Soul." In our numbering it follows the CXXI.

[66] *Earth for body.* — In the next line, the original mis-repeats "My sinful earth" instead of *Fool'd by*, thus making a verse of twelve syllables, and of stark nonsense. The present reading is Malone's: Steevens would read *Starv'd* instead of *Fool'd*. H

Why dost thou pine within, and suffer dearth,
Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?
Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
Eat up thy charge? is this thy body's end?
Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
And let that pine to aggravate thy store;
Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;
Within be fed, without be rich no more:
So shalt thou feed on death, that feeds on men;
And, death once dead, there's no more dying then.

XCVII.

CXLVII. 130.*

My love is as a fever, longing still
For that which longer nurseth the disease,
Feeding on that which doth preserve the ill,
Th' uncertain sickly appetite to please.
My reason, the physician to my love,
Angry that his prescriptions are not kept,
Hath left me; and I desperate now approve,
Desire is death, which physic did except.
Past cure I am, now reason is past care,
And frantic mad with ever-more unrest:
My thoughts and my discourse as madmen's are,
At random from the truth vainly express'd;
For I have sworn thee fair, and thought thee bright,
Who art as black as hell, as dark as night.

CXLVIII. 131.

O me! what eyes hath love put in my head,
Which have no correspondence with true sight!

* This and the next continue the CXLII. in the series of ten on "Love and Hatred" beginning with the CXXIX

Or, if they have, where is my judgment fled,
That censures falsely what they see aright?[67]
If that be fair whereon my false eyes dote,
What means the world to say it is not so?
If it be not, then love doth well denote
Love's eye is not so true as all men's no.
How can it? O! how can Love's eye be true,
That is so vex'd with watching and with tears?
No marvel, then, though I mistake my view;
The sun itself sees not, till heaven clears.
O, cunning Love! with tears thou keep'st me blind,
Lest eyes well-seeing thy foul faults should find.

CL.

CXLIX. 93.*

Canst thou, O cruel! say I love thee not,
When I, against myself, with thee partake?[68]
Do I not think on thee, when I forgot
Am of myself, all tyrant, for thy sake?
Who hateth thee that I do call my friend?
On whom frown'st thou that I do fawn upon?
Nay, if thou lower'st on me, do I not spend
Revenge upon myself with present moan?
What merit do I in myself respect,
That is so proud thy service to despise,
When all my best doth worship thy defect,
Commanded by the motion of thine eyes?
But, love, hate on; for now I know thy mind:
Those that can see thou lov'st, and I am blind.

LVII.

* This Sonnet continues the CXL. in the set of three on "Tyranny."

[67] *Censures* in the sense of *judges*. Such was the more common meaning of the word, as may be seen by many instances in the plays. H.

[68] That is, *take part*.

CL. 132.*

O! from what power hast thou this powerful might,
With insufficiency my heart to sway?
To make me give the lie to my true sight,
And swear that brightness doth not grace the day?
Whence hast thou this becoming of things ill,
That in the very refuse of thy deeds
There is such strength and warrantise of skill,
That, in my mind, thy worst all best exceeds?
Who taught thee how to make me love thee more
The more I hear and see just cause of hate?
O! though I love what others do abhor,
With others thou should'st not abhor my state:
If thy unworthiness rais'd love in me,
More worthy I to be belov'd of thee.

CLI. 133.

Love is too young to know what conscience is,
Yet who knows not, conscience is born of love?
Then, gentle cheater, urge not my amiss,[69]
Lest guilty of my faults thy sweet self prove:
For, thou betraying me, I do betray
My nobler part to my gross body's treason;
My soul doth tell my body that he may
Triumph in love; flesh stays no further reason:
But, rising at thy name, doth point out thee
As his triumphant prize. Proud of this pride,
He is contented thy poor drudge to be,
To stand in thy affairs, fall by thy side.
No want of conscience hold it, that I call
Her love, for whose dear love I rise and fall.

* This and the next two are made to continue the CXLVIII., finishing the series of ten on "Love and Hatred."

[69] *Amiss* as a substantive, for the thing done amiss. See note 18. H.

CLII. 134

In loving thee thou know'st I am forsworn,
But thou art twice forsworn, to me love swearing,
In act thy bed-vow broke, and new faith torn,
In vowing new hate after new love bearing.
But why of two oaths' breach do I accuse thee,
When I break twenty? I am perjur'd most;
For all my vows are oaths but to misuse thee,
And all my honest faith in thee is lost:
For I have sworn deep oaths of thy deep kindness,
Oaths of thy love, thy truth, thy constancy;
And, to enlighten thee, gave eyes to blindness,
Or made them swear against the thing they see:
For I have sworn thee fair; more perjur'd I,
To swear, against the truth, so foul a lie!

CXXXIII.

CLIII. 153.*

Cupid laid by his brand, and fell asleep:
A maid of Dian's this advantage found,
And his love-kindling fire did quickly steep
In a cold valley-fountain of that ground;
Which borrow'd from this holy fire of love
A dateless lively heat, still to endure,
And grew a seething bath, which yet men prove
Against strange maladies a sovereign cure.
But at my mistress' eye love's brand new-fir'd,
The boy for trial needs would touch my breast:
I, sick withal, the help of bath desir'd,
And thither hied, a sad distemper'd guest,

* This Sonnet and the next are set together by themselves, to be headed "The Little Love-God." In our numbering, they follow the CXLIII. It is quite clear that they have no connection or continuity with any of the preceding.

But found no cure: the bath for my help lies
Where Cupid got new fire,—my mistress eyes.

CLIV. 154.

The little Love-god, lying once asleep,
Laid by his side his heart-inflaming brand,
Whilst many nymphs, that vow'd chaste life to keep
Came tripping by; but in her maiden hand
The fairest votary took up that fire
Which many legions of true hearts had warm'd,
And so the general of hot desire
Was, sleeping, by a virgin hand disarm'd.
This brand she quenched in a cool well by,
Which from love's fire took heat perpetual,
Growing a bath and healthful remedy
For men diseas'd; but I, my mistress' thrall,
Came there for cure, and this by that I prove
Love's fire heats water, water cools not love.

A LOVER'S COMPLAINT.

From off a hill, whose concave womb reworded
A plaintful story from a sistering vale,
My spirits t' attend this double voice accorded,
And down I laid to list the sad-tun'd tale;
Ere long espied a fickle maid full pale,
Tearing of papers, breaking rings a-twain,
Storming her world with sorrow's wind and rain.

Upon her head a platted hive of straw,
Which fortified her visage from the sun,
Whereon the thought might think sometime it saw
The carcass of a beauty spent and done:
Time had not scythed all that youth begun,
Nor youth all quit; but, spite of heaven's fell rage,
Some beauty peep'd through lattice of sear'd age.

Oft did she heave her napkin to her eyne,
Which on it had conceited characters,[1]
Laundering the silken figures in the brine
That season'd woe had pelleted in tears,[2]
And often reading what contents it bears;
As often shrieking undistinguish'd woe
In clamours of all size, both high and low.

Sometimes her levell'd eyes their carriage ride,[3]
As they did battery to the spheres intend;

[1] The more usual meaning of *conceited* was *ingenious* or *fanciful*. H.

[2] *Laundering* is *laving* or *washing*. *Pelleted* is formed into little balls.

[3] In allusion to a piece of ordnance

Sometime diverted their poor balls are tied
To the orb'd earth; sometimes they do extend
Their view right on; anon their gazes lend
To every place at once, and nowhere fix'd,
The mind and sight distractedly commix'd.

Her hair, nor loose, nor tied in formal plat,
Proclaim'd in her a careless hand of pride;
For some, untuck'd, descended her sheav'd hat,[4]
Hanging her pale and pined cheek beside;
Some in her threaden fillet still did bide,
And, true to bondage, would not break from thence,
Though slackly braided in loose negligence.

A thousand favours from a maund she drew[5]
Of amber, crystal, and of beaded jet,
Which one by one she in a river threw,
Upon whose weeping margent she was set;
Like usury, applying wet to wet,[6]
Or monarchs' hands, that let not bounty fall
Where want cries "some," but where excess begs all

Of folded schedules had she many a one,
Which she perus'd, sigh'd, tore, and gave the flood;
Crack'd many a ring of posied gold and bone,
Bidding them find their sepulchres in mud;
Found yet more letters sadly penn'd in blood,
With sleided silk feat and affectedly
Enswath'd, and seal'd to curious secrecy.[7]

[4] Called *sheav'd* because made from *sheaves* of *straw*. H.

[5] *Maund* is still used for a *basket* in the north of England. — The original has *bedded* instead of *beaded*. The correction was suggested by Malone, and is approved by Dyce.

[6] Like usury, because adding more to what is already too much. See As You Like It, Act ii. sc. 1, notes 6 and 7. H.

[7] *Sleided* silk is *raw* or *unwrought* silk; elsewhere called *sleave* silk. See Macbeth, Act ii. sc. 2, note 2. — *Feat* is *neat, dexterous*. See Cymbeline, Act i. sc. 1, note 6; and Act v. sc. 5, note 3. H

These often bath'd she in her fluxive eyes,
And often kiss'd, and often 'gan to tear,
Cried, O false blood! thou register of lies,
What unapproved witness dost thou bear!
Ink would have seem'd more black and damned here!
This said, in top of rage the lines she rents,
Big discontent so breaking their contents.

A reverend man that graz'd his cattle nigh,
Sometime a blusterer, that the ruffle knew
Of court, of city, and had let go by
The swiftest hours, observed as they flew,
Towards this afflicted fancy fastly drew;[8]
And, privileg'd by age, desires to know,
In brief, the grounds and motives of her woe.

So slides he down upon his grained bat,[9]
And comely-distant sits he by her side;
When he again desires her, being sat,
Her grievance with his hearing to divide:
If that from him there may be aught applied,
Which may her suffering ecstasy assuage,
'Tis promis'd, in the charity of age.

Father, she says, though in me you behold
The injury of many a blasting hour,
Let it not tell your judgment I am old;
Not age, but sorrow, over me hath power:
I might as yet have been a spreading flower,
Fresh to myself, if I had self-applied
Love to myself, and to no love beside.

[8] *Fancy* was often used for *love;* here, of course, it means the subject of the passion. H.

[9] *Bat* is *cudgel* or *club;* here meaning the man's *staff.* H.

But, woe is me! too early I attended
A youthful suit (it was to gain my grace)
Of one by nature's outwards so commended,
That maidens' eyes stuck over all his face:
Love lack'd a dwelling, and made him her place;
And when in his fair parts she did abide,
She was new lodg'd, and newly deified.

His browny locks did hang in crooked curls,
And every light occasion of the wind
Upon his lips their silken parcels hurls.
What's sweet to do, to do will aptly find:
Each eye that saw him did enchant the mind;
For on his visage was in little drawn,
What largeness thinks in paradise was sawn.[10]

Small show of man was yet upon his chin:
His phœnix down began but to appear,
Like unshorn velvet, on that termless skin,
Whose bare outbragg'd the web it seem'd to wear;
Yet show'd his visage by that cost most dear,
And nice affections wavering stood in doubt
If best 'twere as it was, or best without.

His qualities were beauteous as his form,
For maiden-tongued he was, and thereof free;
Yet, if men mov'd him, was he such a storm,
As oft 'twixt May and April is to see,
When winds breathe sweet, unruly though they be
His rudeness so with his authoriz'd youth
Did livery falseness in a pride of truth.

Well could he ride, and often men would say,—
"That horse his mettle from his rider takes:

[10] *Sawn* for *sown*, to rhyme with *drawn*.

Proud of subjection, noble by the sway,
What rounds, what bounds, what course, what stop
he makes!"
And controversy hence a question takes,
Whether the horse by him became his deed,
Or he his manage by th' well-doing steed.

But quickly on this side the verdict went:
His real habitude gave life and grace
To appertainings and to ornament;
Accomplish'd in himself, not in his case:
All aids, themselves made fairer by their place,
Came for additions, yet their purpos'd trim
Piec'd not his grace, but were all grac'd by him.

So on the tip of his subduing tongue
All kind of arguments and question deep,
All replication prompt, and reason strong,
For his advantage still did wake and sleep:
To make the weeper laugh, the laugher weep,
He had the dialect and different skill,
Catching all passions in his craft of will:"

That he did in the general bosom reign
Of young, of old; and sexes both enchanted,
To dwell with him in thoughts, or to remain
In personal duty, following where he haunted:
Consents, bewitch'd, ere he desire have granted
And dialogued for him what he would say,
Ask'd their own wills, and made their wills obey

Many there were that did his picture get,
To serve their eyes, and in it put their mind;
Like fools that in th' imagination set
The goodly objects which abroad they find
Of lands and mansions, theirs in thought assign'd

[11] What a just and admirable description of the Poet himself

And labouring in more pleasures to bestow them.
Than the true gouty landlord, which doth owe them.[12]

So, many have, that never touch'd his hand,
Sweetly suppos'd them mistress of his heart.
My woeful self, that did in freedom stand,
And was my own fee-simple, (not in part,)
What with his art in youth, and youth in art,
Threw my affections in his charmed power,
Reserv'd the stalk, and gave him all my flowe›

Yet did I not, as some my equals did,
Demand of him, nor, being desired, yielded;
Finding myself in honour so forbid,
With safest distance I mine honour shielded:
Experience for me many bulwarks builded
Of proofs new-bleeding, which remain'd the foil
Of this false jewel, and his amorous spoil.

But, ah! who ever shunn'd by precedent
The destin'd ill she must herself assay?
Or forc'd examples, 'gainst her own content,
To put the by-pass'd perils in her way?
Counsel may stop awhile what will not stay;
For when we rage, advice is often seen,
By blunting us, to make our wits more keen.

Nor gives it satisfaction to our blood,
That we must curb it upon others' proof,
To be forbid the sweets that seem so good,
For fear of harms that preach in our behoof.
O appetite, from judgment stand aloof!
The one a palate hath that needs will taste,
Though reason weep, and cry, "It is thy last."

[12] *Owe* for *own, possess.*

For further I could say, — "This man's untrue;"
And knew the patterns of his foul beguiling;
Heard where his plants in others' orchards grew;
Saw how deceits were gilded in his smiling;
Knew vows were ever brokers to defiling;[13]
Thought characters and words merely but art,
And bastards of his foul adulterate heart.

And long upon these terms I held my city,
Till thus he 'gan besiege me: "Gentle maid,
Have of my suffering youth some feeling pity,
And be not of my holy vows afraid:
That's to you sworn, to none was ever said;
For feasts of love I have been call'd unto;
Till now did ne'er invite, nor never woo.

"All my offences that abroad you see,
Are errors of the blood, none of the mind;
Love made them not: with acture they may be,[14]
Where neither party is nor true nor kind:
They sought their shame that so their shame did find,
And so much less of shame in me remains,
By how much of me their reproach contains.

"Among the many that mine eyes have seen,
Not one whose flame my heart so much as warm'd,
Or my affection put to th' smallest teen,[15]
Or any of my leisures ever charm'd:
Harm have I done to them, but ne'er was harm'd;
Kept hearts in liveries, but mine own was free,
And reign'd, commanding in his monarchy.

[13] *Broker* was used for a *pander*, or *go-between*. See Troilus and Cressida, Act v. sc. 11, note 3. H.

[14] *Acture* for *action*. So in Hamlet we have *enactures*. H.

[15] The plays have many instances of *teen* thus used for *grief* or *sorrow* H.

"Look here, what tributes wounded fancies sent me,
Of paled pearls, and rubies red as blood;
Figuring that they their passions likewise lent me
Of grief and blushes, aptly understood
In bloodless white and the encrimson'd mood;
Effects of terror and dear modesty,
Encamp'd in hearts, but fighting outwardly.

"And, lo! behold, these talents of their hair,[16]
With twisted metal amorously impleach'd,
I have receiv'd from many a several fair,
(Their kind acceptance weepingly beseech'd,)
With the annexions of fair gems enrich'd,
And deep-brain'd sonnets, that did amplify
Each stone's dear nature, worth, and quality.

"The diamond, why, 'twas beautiful and hard,
Whereto his invis'd properties did tend;[17]
The deep-green emerald, in whose fresh regard
Weak sights their sickly radiance do amend;
The heaven-hued sapphire and the opal blend
With objects manifold: each several stone,
With wit well blazon'd, smil'd or made some moan.

"Lo! all these trophies of affections hot,
Of pensiv'd and subdued desires the tender,
Nature hath charg'd me that I hoard them not,
But yield them up where I myself must render,
That is, to you, my origin and ender:
For these, of force, must your oblations be,
Since I their altar, you enpatron me.

[16] *Talents* is probably used, to express the costliness of the gifts — *Impleach'd* is *intertwined*. See Antony and Cleopatra, Act iv sc. 12, note 8. H.

[17] *Invis'd* for *unseen* or *invisible*; probably a word of the Poet's own coining, as no other instance of it is known. H

"O then! advance of yours that phraseless hand,
Whose white weighs down the airy scale of praise;
Take all these similes to your own command,
Hallow'd with sighs that burning lungs did raise:
What me, your minister, for you obeys,
Works under you; and to your audit comes
Their distract parcels in combined sums.

"Lo! this device was sent me from a nun,
A sister sanctified, of holiest note;
Which late her noble suit in court did shun,[18]
Whose rarest havings made the blossoms dote:[19]
For she was sought by spirits of richest coat,
But kept cold distance; and did thence remove,
To spend her living in eternal love.

"But O, my sweet! what labour is't to leave
The thing we love not, mastering what not strives?
Paling the place which did no form receive;[20]
Playing patient sports in unconstrained gyves?
She that her fame so to herself contrives,[21]
The scars of battle 'scapeth by the flight,
And makes her absence valiant, not her might.

"O, pardon me, in that my boast is true!
The accident which brought me to her eye,
Upon the moment did her force subdue,

[18] That is, retired from the solicitation of her noble suitors.

[19] Whose captivations were so great as to bewitch the flower of the nobility. — *Coat*, in the next line, probably means coat of arms; men of splendid heraldry. H.

[20] Securing within the pale of a cloister that heart which had never received the impression of love. The original has *Playing*, which Malone changed to *Paling*, that is, *fencing*. — In the preceding line, the original misprints *have* instead of *love*. H.

[21] *Contrive* was sometimes used as from the Latin *contero*, for *wear away* or *spend*. See The Taming of the Shrew, Act i. sc. 2. note 19. H

And now she would the caged cloister fly;
Religious love put out religion's eye:
Not to be tempted, would she be immur'd,
And now, to tempt all, liberty procur'd.

"How mighty, then, you are, O, hear me tell!
The broken bosoms that to me belong
Have emptied all their fountains in my well,
And mine I pour your ocean all among:
I strong o'er them, and you o'er me being strong,
Must for your victory us all congest,[22]
As compound love to physic your cold breast

"My parts had power to charm a sacred nun,
Who, disciplin'd and dieted in grace,[23]
Believ'd her eyes, when they t' assail begun,
All vows and consecrations giving place.
O, most potential love! vow, bond, nor space,
In thee hath neither sting, knot, nor confine;
For thou art all, and all things else are thine.

"When thou impressest, what are precepts worth
Of stale example? When thou wilt inflame,
How coldly those impediments stand forth
Of wealth, of filial fear, law, kindred, fame!
Love arms our peace 'gainst rule, 'gainst sense, 'gainst shame;
And sweetens, in the suffering pangs it bears,
The aloes of all forces, shocks, and fears.

"Now, all these hearts that do on mine depend,
Feeling it break, with bleeding groans they pine;

[22] To *congest* is to *heap together*.

[23] Of the original, some copies have *I died*, others, *I dieted*, which was changed to *and dieted* by Malone. — The original misprints *sun* for *nun*. The change is Malone's. H.

[24] The warfare that love carries on against rule, sense, and shame produces to the parties engaged a peaceful enjoyment.

And supplicant their sighs to you extend,
To leave the battery that you make 'gainst mine;
Lending soft audience to my sweet design,
And credent soul to that strong-bonded oath,
That shall prefer and undertake my troth."

This said, his watery eyes he did dismount,
Whose sights till then were levell'd on my face;
Each cheek a river running from a fount
With brinish current downward flow'd apace.
O, how the channel to the stream gave grace!
Who, glaz'd with crystal, gate the glowing roses
That flame through water which their hue encloses.

O father! what a hell of witchcraft lies
In the small orb of one particular tear!
But with the inundation of the eyes,
What rocky heart to water will not wear?
What breast so cold, that is not warmed here?
O, cleft effect! cold modesty, hot wrath,
Both fire from hence and chill extincture hath!

For, lo! his passion, but an art of craft,
Even there resolv'd my reason into tears;
There my white stole of chastity I daff'd;
Shook off my sober guards, and civil fears;
Appear to him, as he to me appears,
All melting; though our drops this difference bore,
His poison'd me, and mine did him restore.

In him a plenitude of subtle matter,
Applied to cautels, all strange forms receives,[25]
Of burning blushes, or of weeping water,

[25] *Cautel* is *deceit* or *fraud*. See Coriolanus, Act iv sc. note 3.

Or swooning paleness; and he takes and leaves,
In either's aptness, as it best deceives,
To blush at speeches rank, to weep at woes,
Or to turn white, and swoon at tragic shows:

That not a heart, which in his level came,
Could scape the hail of his all-hurting aim,
Showing fair nature is both kind and tame;
And, veil'd in them, did win whom he would maim
Against the thing he sought he would exclaim:
When he most burn'd in heart-wish'd luxury,
He preach'd pure maid, and prais'd cold chastity.

Thus, merely with the garment of a Grace,
The naked and concealed fiend he cover'd;
That th' unexperienc'd gave the tempter place,
Which, like a cherubin, above them hover'd.
Who, young and simple, would not be so lover'd?
Ah me! I fell; and yet do question make
What I should do again for such a sake.

O, that infected moisture of his eye!
O, that false fire which in his cheek so glow'd!
O, that forc'd thunder from his heart did fly!
O, that sad breath his spongy lungs bestow'd!
O, all that borrow'd motion, seeming owed,[26]
Would yet again betray the fore-betray'd,
And new pervert a reconciled maid!

[26] That is, that seemed real and his own.

INTRODUCTION

TO

THE PASSIONATE PILGRIM.

"THE PASSIONATE PILGRIM, by W. SHAKESPEARE. At London: Printed for W. Jaggard, and are to be sold by W. Leake, at the Greyhound in Paul's Church-yard, 1599." Such is the title-page of a 16mo volume of thirty leaves, the contents of which are the same, and given in the same order, as in the pages following this Introduction; except that the last poem, entitled "The Phœnix and Turtle," is taken, as will be seen by note 18, from another source. The collection was reprinted in 1612, with additions, and with a new title-page reading thus: "The Passionate Pilgrim; Or certain amorous Sonnets, between Venus and Adonis, newly corrected and augmented. By W. Shakespeare. The third Edition: Whereunto is newly added two Love-epistles, the first from Paris to Helen, and Helen's answer back again to Paris. Printed by W. Jaggard. 1612." In some copies of this edition, the words, "By W. Shakespeare," are omitted from the title-page. It is here called "the third edition;" but of the second, if there were any, as there may have been, nothing has been seen in modern times.

The circumstances, which were somewhat peculiar, attending the issue of these two impressions, are thus stated by Mr. Collier:

"In 1598 Richard Barnfield put his name to a small collection of productions in verse, entitled The Encomion of Lady Pecunia, which contained more than one poem attributed to Shakespeare in The Passionate Pilgrim, 1699. The first was printed by John, and the last by William Jaggard. Boswell suggests, that John Jaggard in 1598 might have stolen Shakespeare's verses, and attributed them to Barnfield; but the answer to this supposition is two-fold: First, that Barnfield formally, and in his own name, printed them as his in 1598; and next, that he reprinted them under the same circumstances in 1605, notwithstanding they had been in the mean time assigned to Shakespeare. The truth seems to be, that W. Jaggard took them in 1599 from Barnfield's publication

printed by John Jaggard in 1598. In 1612 W. Jaggard went even more boldly to work; for in the impression of The Passionate Pilgrim of that year he not only repeated Barnfield's poems of 1598, but included two of Ovid's Epistles, which had been translated by Thomas Heywood, and printed by him with his name in his *Troja Britannica*, 1609. The Epistles were made, with some little ambiguity, to appear, in The Passionate Pilgrim of 1612, to have been also the work of Shakespeare. When, therefore, Heywood published his next work in 1612, he exposed the wrong that had been thus done to him, and claimed the performances as his own. He seems also to have taken steps against W. Jaggard; for the latter cancelled the title-page of The Passionate Pilgrim, 1612, which contained the name of Shakespeare, and substituted another without any name; so far discrediting Shakespeare's right to any of the poems the work contained, although some were his beyond all dispute. Malone's copy in the Bodleian Library has both title-pages.

"To what extent, therefore, we may accept W. Jaggard's assertion of the authorship of Shakespeare of the poems in The Passionate Pilgrim, is a question of some difficulty Two Sonnets, with which the little volume opens, are contained, with variations, in Thorpe's edition of Shakespeare's Sonnets, 1609: three other pieces, also with changes, are found in Love's Labour's Lost, which had been printed the year before The Passionate Pilgrim originally came out: another, and its 'answer' notoriously belong to Marlowe and Raleigh: a Sonnet, with some slight differences had been printed as his in 1596, by a person of the name of Griffin; while one production appeared in England's Helicon in 1600, under the signature of *Ignoto*."

There is no need of dwelling any longer here on the several pieces in the collection, as all the known particulars of any consequence respecting them will be stated in our notes. It may be worth the while to mention, that after the piece numbered XV., the original has a new title-page running as follows: "Sonnets to sundry Notes of Music. At London: Printed for W. Jaggard, and are to be sold by W. Leake, at the Greyhound in Paul's Churchyard." From which it would seem that the remaining pieces of the collection had been married to tunes, for the delectation of music-loving ears in the squire's hall and the yeoman's chimney-corner, where old songs were wont to be sung. It is said, that other evidence of such marriage has descended to our time. Touching the merits of the following poems, perhaps the less said, the better. Excepting the pieces which are found elsewhere in the Poet's works, and excepting the last piece, which relishes somewhat of his cunning style, they might well enough be spared from his roll of authorship. No one, however, who rightly understands him, would willingly be without a single line that can show any fair credentials of having been made or even mended by him.

THE PASSIONATE PILGRIM.

I.

When my love swears that she is made of truth,
I do believe her, though I know she lies,
That she might think me some untutor'd youth,
Unskilful in the world's false forgeries.
Thus, vainly thinking that she thinks me young,
Although I know my years be past the best,
I smiling credit her false-speaking tongue,
Outfacing faults, in love with love's ill rest.
But wherefore says my love that she is young?
And wherefore say not I that I am old?
O! love's best habit is a soothing tongue,
And age, in love, loves not to have years told.
Therefore I'll lie with love, and love with me,
Since that our faults in love thus smother'd be.

II.

Two loves I have of comfort and despair,
Which like two spirits do suggest me still:
The better angel is a man, right fair,
The worser spirit a woman, colour'd ill.
To win me soon to hell, my female evil
Tempteth my better angel from my side,
And would corrupt a saint to be a devil,
Wooing his purity with her fair pride:
And whether that my angel be turn'd fiend,
Suspect I may, but not directly tell;

For being both to me, both to each friend,
I guess one angel in another's hell.
The truth I shall not know, but live in doubt,
Till my bad angel fire my good one out.[1]

III.

Did not the heavenly rhetoric of thine eye,
'Gainst whom the world cannot hold argument,
Persuade my heart to this false perjury?
Vows for thee broke deserve not punishment.
A woman I forswore; but I will prove,
Thou being a goddess, I forswore not thee:
My vow was earthly, thou a heavenly love;
Thy grace being gain'd, cures all disgrace in me
My vow was breath, and breath a vapor is:
Then thou, fair sun, which on my earth dost shine
Exhale this vapor vow; in thee it is:
If broken, then, it is no fault of mine;
If by me broke, what fool is not so wise,
To break an oath, to win a paradise?[2]

IV.

Sweet Cytherea, sitting by a brook,
With young Adonis, lovely, fresh, and green,
Did court the lad with many a lovely look,
Such looks as none could look but beauty's queen.
She told him stories to delight his ear;
She show'd him favours to allure his eye;

[1] This Sonnet and the preceding, which were printed as part of the Passionate Pilgrim in 1599, were also included as the CXXXVIII. and the CXLIV. in the collection of Sonnets published in 1609. The two copies, it may be seen, vary somewhat in the language; which is our reason for retaining them here. H.

[2] This Sonnet is found, slightly varied, in Love's Labour's Lost, Act iv. sc. 3 H

To win his heart, she touch'd him here and there
Touches so soft still conquer chastity.
But whether unripe years did want conceit,
Or he refus'd to take her figur'd proffer,
The tender nibbler would not touch the bait,
But smile and jest at every gentle offer:
Then fell she on her back, fair queen, and toward
He rose, and ran away; ah, fool too froward!

V.

If love make me forsworn, how shall I swear to love?
O! never faith could hold, if not to beauty vow'd:
Though to myself forsworn, to thee I'll constant prove;
Those thoughts, to me like oaks, to thee like osiers bow'd.
Study his bias leaves, and makes his book thine eyes,
Where all those pleasures live, that art can comprehend.
If knowledge be the mark, to know thee shall suffice;
Well-learned is that tongue that well can thee commend;
All ignorant that soul that sees thee without wonder,
Which is to me some praise, that I thy parts admire:
Thine eye Jove's lightning seems, thy voice his dreadful thunder,
Which, not to anger bent, is music and sweet fire.
Celestial as thou art, O! do not love that wrong,
To sing the heavens' praise with such an earthly tongue.[3]

[3] This Sonnet also occurs, with some variations, in Love's Labour's Lost, Act IV. sc. 2. M.

VI.

Scarce had the sun dried up the dewy morn,
And scarce the herd gone to the hedge for shade
When Cytherea, all in love forlorn,
A longing tarriance for Adonis made,
Under an osier growing by a brook,—
A brook where Adon us'd to cool his spleen:
Hot was the day; she hotter, that did look
For his approach, that often there had been.
Anon he comes, and throws his mantle by,
And stood stark naked on the brook's green brim
The sun look'd on the world with glorious eye,
Yet not so wistly as this queen on him:
He, spying her, bounc'd in, whereas he stood:
O Jove! quoth she, why was not I a flood?

VII.

Fair is my love, but not so fair as fickle;
Mild as a dove, but neither true nor trusty;
Brighter than glass, and yet, as glass is, brittle,
Softer than wax, and yet, as iron, rusty:
A lily pale, with damask dye to grace her;
None fairer, nor none falser to deface her.

Her lips to mine how often hath she join'd,
Between each kiss her oaths of true love swearing
How many tales to please me hath she coin'd,
Dreading my love, the loss whereof still fearing!
Yet, in the midst of all her pure protestings,
Her faith, her oaths, her tears, and all were jestings

She burn'd with love, as straw with fire flameth;
She burn'd out love, as soon as straw outburneth;
She fram'd the love, and yet she foil'd the framing
She bade love last, and yet she fell a-turning.

Was this a lover, or a lecher whether?
Bad in the best, though excellent in neither.

VIII.

If music and sweet poetry agree,[4]
As they must needs, the sister and the brother,
Then must the love be great 'twixt thee and me,
Because thou lov'st the one, and I the other.
Douland to thee is dear, whose heavenly touch
Upon the lute doth ravish human sense;
Spenser to me, whose deep conceit is such,
As passing all conceit needs no defence.
Thou lov'st to hear the sweet melodious sound
That Phœbus' lute (the queen of music) makes;
And I in deep delight am chiefly drown'd
Whenas himself to singing he betakes.
One god is god of both, as poets feign;
One knight loves both, and both in thee remain.

IX.

Fair was the morn, when the fair queen of love,[5]
. . . . . .
Paler for sorrow than her milk-white dove,
For Adon's sake, a youngster proud and wild:
Her stand she takes upon a steep-up hill.
Anon Adonis comes with horn and hounds:
She, silly queen, with more than love's good will,
Forbade the boy he should not pass those grounds:

[4] This Sonnet was published in Richard Barnfield's Encomion of Lady Pecunia, 1598, the year before its appearance in The Passionate Pilgrim. It was also retained in Barnfield's edition of 1605. Probably, therefore, he has a right to the credit of it, and Shakespeare will not be much impoverished by missing the inheritance H.

[5] The next line is wanting in both the old copies H

"Once," quoth she, "did I see a fair, sweet youth
Here in these brakes deep-wounded with a boar,
Deep in the thigh, a spectacle of ruth!
See in my thigh," quoth she, "here was the sore."
She showed hers: he saw more wounds than one;
And blushing fled, and left her all alone.

X.

Sweet rose, fair flower untimely pluck'd, soon faded,
Pluck'd in the bud, and faded in the spring!
Bright orient pearl, alack! too timely shaded;
Fair creature, kill'd too soon by death's sharp sting!
Like a green plum that hangs upon a tree,
And falls, (through wind,) before the fall should be

I weep for thee, and yet no cause I have;
For why? thou left'st me nothing in thy will:
And yet thou left'st me more than I did crave;
For why? I craved nothing of thee still:
O yes, dear friend! I pardon crave of thee;
Thy discontent thou didst bequeathe to me.

XI.

Venus, with young Adonis sitting by her,
Under a myrtle shade, began to woo him:
She told the youngling how god Mars did try her
And as he fell to her, so fell she to him.
Even thus, (quoth she,) the warlike god embrac d
me;
And then she clipp'd Adonis in her arms:
Even thus, (quoth she,) the warlike god unlac'd
me;
As if the boy should use like loving charms:
Even thus, (quoth she,) he seized on my lips;
And with her lips on his did act the seizure:

And as she fetched breath, away he skips,
And would not take her meaning nor her pleasure
Ah! that I had my lady at this bay,
To kiss and clip me till I ran away![6]

XII.

Crabbed age and youth
Cannot live together:
Youth is full of pleasance,
Age is full of care;
Youth like summer morn,
Age like winter weather;
Youth like summer brave,
Age like winter bare:
Youth is full of sport,
Age's breath is short;
Youth is nimble, age is lame;
Youth is hot and bold,
Age is weak and cold;
Youth is wild, and age is tame.
Age, I do abhor thee;
Youth, I do adore thee:
O, my love, my love is young
Age, I do defy thee:
O, sweet shepherd! hie thee,
For methinks thou stay'st too long.

XIII.

Beauty is but a vain and doubtful good;
A shining gloss that fadeth suddenly;

[6] This Sonnet, considerably varied, is the third in a collection of Sonnets entitled Fidessa, and published in 1596, with the name of B. Griffin as the author. Mr. Collier, however, had seen it in a manuscript of the time, with the initials W. S. at the end. The words, *young* in the first line, and *so* in the fourth, are taken from Griffin's collection.

A flower that dies, when first it 'gins to bud;
A brittle glass, that's broken presently:
A doubtful good, a gloss, a glass, a flower,
Lost, faded, broken, dead within an hour.

And as goods lost are seld or never found;
As faded gloss no rubbing will refresh;
As flowers dead lie wither'd on the ground;
As broken glass no cement can redress;
So beauty, blemish'd once, for ever's lost,
In spite of physic, painting, pain, and cost.

XIV.

Good night, good rest. Ah! neither be my share:
She bade good night, that kept my rest away;
And daff'd me to a cabin hang'd with care,
To descant on the doubts of my decay.
Farewell, quoth she, and come again to-morrow,
Fare well I could not, for I supp'd with sorrow.

Yet at my parting sweetly did she smile,
In scorn or friendship, nill I construe whether:[7]
'T may be, she joy'd to jest at my exile,
'T may be, again to make me wander thither:
"Wander!"—a word for shadows like myself,
As take the pain, but cannot pluck the pelf.

XV.

Lord, how mine eyes throw gazes to the east!
My heart doth charge the watch; the morning rise
Doth cite each moving sense from idle rest.
Not daring trust the office of mine eyes,
While Philomela sits and sings I sit and mark,
And wish her lays were tuned like the lark;

[7] *Nill* is an old form of *will not.*

For she doth welcome daylight with her ditty,
And drives away dark dismal-dreaming night:
The night so pack'd, I post unto my pretty:
Heart hath his hope, and eyes their wished sight;
Sorrow chang'd to solace, solace mix'd with sorrow;
For why? she sigh'd, and bade me come to-morrow.

Were I with her, the night would post too soon;
But now are minutes added to the hours:
To spite me now, each minute seems a moon;
Yet not for me, shine sun to succour flowers!
Pack night, peep day; good day, of night now borrow;
Short, night, to-night, and length thyself to-morrow

XVI.

It was a lording's daughter,
The fairest one of three,
That liked of her master
As well as well might be,
Till looking on an Englishman,
The fair'st that eye could see,
Her fancy fell a-turning.

Long was the combat doubtful,
That love with love did fight,
To leave the master loveless,
Or kill the gallant knight:
To put in practice either,
Alas! it was a spite
Unto the silly damsel.

But one must be refused,
More mickle was the pain,
That nothing could be used,
To turn them both to gain;

For of the two the trusty knight
Was wounded with disdain:
Alas! she could not help it.

Thus art with arms contending
Was victor of the day,
Which by a gift of learning
Did bear the maid away:
Then lullaby; the learned man
Hath got the lady gay;
For now my song is ended.[8]

XVII.

On a day, (alack the day!)
Love, whose month was ever May,
Spied a blossom passing fair,
Playing in the wanton air:
Through the velvet leaves the wind,
All unseen, 'gan passage find;
That the lover, sick to death,
Wish'd himself the heaven's breath.
Air, quoth he, thy cheeks may blow;
Air, would I might triumph so!
But, alas! my hand hath sworn
Ne'er to pluck thee from thy thorn:
Vow, alack, for youth unmeet;
Youth, so apt to pluck a sweet.
Do not call it sin in me,
That I am forsworn for thee:
Thou, for whom Jove would swear
Juno but an Ethiop were;
And deny himself for Jove,
Turning mortal for thy love.[9]

[8] In the original, this piece stands first in the division called "Sonnets to sundry Notes of Music." H.

[9] This poem, in a more finished state, and with two additional

XVIII.

My flocks feed not,
My ewes breed not,
My rams speed not,
  All is amiss:
Love is dying,
Faith's defying,
Heart's denying,
  Causer of this.
All my merry jigs are quite forgot;
All my lady's love is lost, God wot:
Where her faith was firmly fix'd in love,
There a nay is plac'd without remove.
One silly cross
Wrought all my loss:
O, frowning Fortune, cursed, fickle dame!
For now I see
Inconstancy
More in women than in men remain.

In black mourn I;
All fears scorn I;
Love hath forlorn me,
  Living in thrall:
Heart is bleeding,
All help needing,
(O, cruel speeding!)
  Fraughted with gall.
My shepherd's pipe can sound no deal;[10]
My wether's bell rings doleful knell;

lines, occurs in Love's Labour's Lost, Act iv. sc. 3. It was also printed in England's Helicon, 1600, with the signature "W Shakespeare." H.

[10] "Ne *deal*" is no *part*; the same as in the phrase, "a good *deal*." H.

My curtail dog, that wont to have play'd,
Plays not at all, but seems afraid;
My sighs so deep,
Procure to weep,[11]
In howling-wise, to see my doleful plight.
How sighs resound
Through harkless ground,
Like a thousand vanquish'd men in bloody fight!

Clear wells spring not;
Sweet birds sing not;
Green plants bring not
Forth their dye:
Herds stand weeping,
Flocks all sleeping,
Nymphs back creeping
Fearfully.
All our pleasure known to us poor swains,
All our merry meetings on the plains,
All our evening sport from us is fled;
All our love is lost, for love is dead.
Farewell, sweet lass;
Thy like ne'er was
For a sweet content, the cause of all my moan:
Poor Coridon
Must live alone;
Other help for him I see that there is none.[12]

XIX.

Whenas thine eye hath chose the dame,
And stall'd the deer that thou wouldst strike,

[11] That is, *cause him*, the dog, to weep.

[12] This poem, also, was published in England's Helicon, but is there called "The unknown Shepherd's Complaint," and signed *Ignoto*. It had appeared anonymously, with music, in a collection of Madrigals by Thomas Weelkes, 1597. The three forms have some slight variations, but none worth noticing. M.

Let reason rule things worthy blame,
As well as partial fancy like:[13]
Take counsel of some wiser head,
Neither too young, nor yet unwed.

And when thou com'st thy tale to tell,
Smooth not thy tongue with filed talk,
Lest she some subtle practice smell;
(A cripple soon can find a halt;)
But plainly say thou lov'st her well,
And set her person forth to sell:

And to her will frame all thy ways;[14]
Spare not to spend, and chiefly there
Where thy desert may merit praise,
By ringing always in her ear.
The strongest castle, tower, and town
The golden bullet beats it down.

Serve always with assured trust,
And in thy suit be humble, true;
Unless thy lady prove unjust,
Seek never thou to choose anew.
When time shall serve, be thou not slack
To proffer, though she put thee back.

What though her frowning brows be bent,
Her cloudy looks will clear ere night;
And then too late she will repent,
That she dissembled her delight;

[13] In the original, this line reads, "As well as fancy *party all might*." The present reading is taken by Mr. Collier from a manuscript of the time. Malone had changed the line into, "As well as fancy, partial *tike*." H.

[14] In the old copy, this stanza and the next come in after the two following, where they seem something misplaced. The present transposition is generally adopted in modern editions. H.

And twice desire, ere it be day,
That which with scorn she put away.

What though she strive to try her strength,
And ban, and brawl, and say thee nay,
Her feeble force will yield at length,
When craft hath taught her thus to say, —
"Had women been so strong as men,
In faith, you had not had it then."

The wiles and guiles that women work,
Dissembled with an outward show,
The tricks and toys that in them lurk,
The cock that treads them shall not know
Have you not heard it said full oft,
A woman's nay doth stand for nought?

Think, women love to match with men,
And not to live so like a saint:
Here is no heaven; they holy then
Begin, when age doth them attaint.
Were kisses all the joys in bed,
One woman would another wed.

But, soft! enough! too much, I fear,
For if my lady hear my song,
She will not stick to warm mine ear,
To teach my tongue to be so long:
Yet will she blush, here be it said,
To hear her secrets so bewray'd.[15]

[15] In the copy of 1599, the last two stanzas vary somewhat from the text as here given, which was corrected by Malone from a manuscript of the time. *Warm*, in the last stanza, is from the manuscript used by Mr. Collier, the usual reading being "*wring* mine ear" H.

XX.

Live with me and be my love,[16]
And we will all the pleasures prove,
That hills and valleys, dales and fields,
And the craggy mountain yields.

There will we sit upon the rocks,
And see the shepherds feed their flocks
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

There will I make thee a bed of roses,
With a thousand fragrant posies;
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
Embroider'd all with leaves of myrtle;

A belt of straw and ivy buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs:
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Then live with me and be my love.

LOVE'S ANSWER.

If that the world and love were young,
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,
These pretty pleasures might me move,
To live with thee and be thy love.

[16] This poem and the "Answer," both of which are here very incomplete, especially the latter, are well known as the workmanship of Christopher Marlowe and Sir Walter Raleigh. They appeared in England's Helicon, the one as Marlowe's, the other under the name of *Ignoto*, which was the signature sometime used by Raleigh. See, also, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Act iii. sc. 1, note 2. Both songs are given in full at the end of that play H.

XXI.

As it fell upon a day[17]
In the merry month of May,
Sitting in a pleasant shade,
Which a grove of myrtles made,
Beasts did leap and birds did sing,
Trees did grow and plants did spring;
Every thing did banish moan,
Save the nightingale alone:
She, poor bird, as all-forlorn,
Lean'd her breast up-till a thorn,
And there sung the doleful'st ditty,
That to hear it was great pity.
Fie, fie, fie! now would she cry;
Tereu, tereu! by and by;
That, to hear her so complain,
Scarce I could from tears refrain;
For her griefs, so lively shown,
Made me think upon mine own.
Ah! thought I, thou mourn'st in vain,
None takes pity on thy pain:
Senseless trees they cannot hear thee,
Ruthless bears they will not cheer thee.
King Pandion he is dead,
All thy friends are lapp'd in lead;
All thy fellow birds do sing,
Careless of thy sorrowing.

XXII.

Whilst as fickle fortune smil'd,
Thou and I were both beguil'd:

[17] This poem is found in Barnfield's Encomion of Lady Pecunia, 1598, and also in England's Helicon. In the latter it has the signature *Ignoto*; but as Barnfield retained it in his edition of 1605, he probably had a right to it. H

Every one that flatters thee
Is no friend in misery.
Words are easy, like the wind;
Faithful friends are hard to find:
Every man will be thy friend,
Whilst thou hast wherewith to spend;
But, if store of crowns be scant,
No man will supply thy want.
If that one be prodigal,
Bountiful they will him call,
And, with such like flattering,
Pity but he were a king:
If he be addict to vice,
Quickly him they will entice:
If to women he be bent,
They have him at commandement;
But, if fortune once do frown,
Then farewell his great renown:
They that fawn'd on him before
Use his company no more.
He that is thy friend indeed,
He will help thee in thy need:
If thou sorrow, he will weep;
If thou wake, he cannot sleep:
Thus, of every grief in heart,
He with thee does bear a part.
These are certain signs to know
Faithful friend from flattering foe.[18]

[18] Here ends The Passionate Pilgrim. The next poem is an independent matter, and was printed in Robert Chester's "Love's Martyr, or Rosalin's Complaint," 1601, among what are there called "new Compositions of several modern Writers, whose names are subscribed to their several Works." It was printed with Shakespeare's name at the bottom. H.

THE PHŒNIX AND TURTLE

Let the bird of loudest lay,
On the sole Arabian tree,[19]
Herald sad and trumpet be,
To whose sound chaste wings obey.

But, thou shrieking harbinger,
Foul precurrer of the fiend,
Augur of the fever's end,
To this troop come thou not near.

From this session interdict
Every fowl of tyrant wing,
Save the eagle, feather'd king:
Keep the obsequy so strict.

Let the priest in surplice white,
That defunctive music can,[20]
Be the death-divining swan,
Lest the requiem lack his right:

And thou, treble-dated crow,
That thy sable gender mak'st
With the breath thou giv'st and tak'st,
'Mongst our mourners shalt thou go.

Here the anthem doth commence:
Love and constancy is dead;

[19] "The bird of loudest lay" is several times alluded to by Shakespeare as the "Arabian bird." See The Tempest, Act iii. sc. 3, note 4; and Othello, Act v. sc. 2, note 28. H.

[20] That is, who understands funereal music.

Phœnix and the turtle fled
In a mutual flame from hence.

So they lov'd, as love in twain
Had the essence but in one;
Two distincts, division none:
Number there in love was slain.

Hearts remote, yet not asunder;
Distance, and no space was seen
'Twixt the turtle and his queen:
But in them it were a wonder.

So between them love did shine,
That the turtle saw his right
Flaming in the phœnix's sight:
Either was the other's mine.

Property was thus appall'd,
That the self was not the same;
Single nature's double name
Neither two nor one was call'd.

Reason, in itself confounded,
Saw division grow together;
To themselves yet either neither,
Simple were so well compounded;

That it cried, — How true a twain
Seemeth this concordant one!
Love hath reason, reason none,
If what parts can so remain.

Whereupon it made this threne[21]
To the phœnix and the dove,
Co-supremes and stars of love,
As chorus to their tragic scene:

[21] A *threne* is a funeral song.

THRENOS.

Beauty, truth, and rarity,
Grace in all simplicity,
Here enclos'd in cinders lie.

Death is now the phœnix' nest;
And the turtle's loyal breast
To eternity doth rest,

Leaving no posterity:
'Twas not their infirmity;
It was married chastity.

Truth may seem, but cannot be;
Beauty brag, but 'tis not she:
Truth and beauty buried be.

To this urn let those repair,
That are either true or fair:
For these dead birds sigh a prayer.

WM. SHAKESPEARE.

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